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Melancholy of the third year student

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Asahi you poor soul LOLLOL

Here's the second most requested chapter!

Clap, clap.

Amidst the cooling morning breeze, a rhythmic crisp sound could be heard. It was then absorbed by the surrounding trees and disappeared. The morning sun spilled from the gap between the leaves as Azumane clapped his hands in front of the shrine.

His mouth mumbling as he shut his eyes. When he was done, he shrank his body and bowed towards the deity. He then picked up his school bag from the floor and left the shrine.

He looked up the big tree with straw ropes tied to it. Passing by the hand washing area, Azumane ran down the narrow and steep stairs.

“Oh!”

Azumane saw his teammates while on the road. One of them was Sawamura, who had a note in his hands while mumbling to himself while walking; the other was Sugawara, who had a plastic bag from the convenience store in his hands. On their way to school, the three third year students from Karasuno High School, each wearing their sports attire, had all gathered.

“Morning, Asahi.”

Sugawara greeted him while Sawamura was still staring at his notes.

“Daichi, is that the speech draft for the swearing-in ceremony?”

The “Swearing-in ceremony” Azumane mentioned referred to the activity planned by the school in order to cheer on the club members who would be taking part in their respective Inter High games. The captains of each club must present a speech during the school assembly.

Sawamura must present the speech as the captain of the male volleyball club, with the topic revolving around the atmosphere of the club before the upcoming match.

“Hmm? Ah.”

Sawamura finally raised his head.

“Why, Asahi. Fell for a shrine maiden?”

“N-No of course not! It’s closer walking from the Shrine. Also, I was just thanking the deity for letting me pass through, so I was just greeting them!”

Seeing Azumane’s flustered face, Sugawara smiled.

“Given Azumane’s character, it feels as though he was brought up by his granny.”

“But just from his looks, Azumane looked like a conman who would target old people.”

Hearing Sawamura’s cruel words, Azumane’s brittle heart broke into pieces.

“What? Would I do that?”

“Yeah, Daichi. If strangers heard of it, they’ll think it’s true.”

“Suga.....”

Sugawara walked forward energetically with big steps while Azumane trailed behind with staggering steps. Sawamura had returned his gaze to his notes. Amidst the chirps of the sparrows, the three of them continued walking along the road heading to school

—

“Morning!”

“Ah, morning!”

When the three of them reached the second gymnasium, their kouhais, which had arrived earlier, all walked up to greet them.

“Morning.”

Hearing Azumane’s voice, Nishinoya rushed towards him immediately.

“Good! Asahi-san, you’re not late today!”

“Nishinoya, Don’t be so loud! See, Daichi is.....”

Azumane felt Sawamura’s piercing glare from behind him. He shrunk his body, as if trying to hide himself. Seeing the way he looked, Sugawara smiled bitterly.

“Asahi is habitually late.”

“H-How can you say that.....”

Azumane looked up at Sugawara, his voice shaking. Staring at their backs, Sawamura commanded in a voice that traveled across the whole gymnasium.

“We’ll split into groups to practice receiving after warm up exercises.”

The club’s manager Shimizu blew the whistle and everyone spread themselves around the gymnasium, and thus began the morning practice focused on the basics.

The initially cold gymnasium became surrounded by heat immediately. the members split themselves into groups of two and started practicing among themselves. Receives, tosses, spikes, receives..... just as the gymnasium was filled with sounds of the balls, Hinata screamed in panic.

“Uwah, eh..... yah yah.”

“Stupid! Lousy!” Kageyama, who was in the same team as Hinata, scolded Hinata, who had dropped the ball.

Scolding someone with such energy early in the morning..... Azumane thought. Sugawara, who received the ball, didn’t continue passing, instead telling Azumane: “sorry, please wait a minute,” then headed towards Hinata.

“Hinata, visualise where the ball would land, then run under the ball to receive.”

“Yes!”

Azumane looked at Hinata responding earnestly, then glanced towards Kageyama, who was standing behind Hinata, his face upset. Sugawara returned to his original position and threw the ball back at Azumane. Azumane caught onto the ball hurriedly.

“.....Oh! Sugawara really knows how to take care of the younger members.”

“Really? But with just scolding, Hinata would never improve.”

After saying, Sugawara continued tossing the ball. Hinata, who was beside him, also managed to toss the ball well. Azumane glanced at the two of them from the side, then mumbled “I see”, feeling impressed with Sugawara.

—

One hour later, the members who were done with morning practice headed towards the club room, passing remarks such as being hungry and so on, the place noisy all of a sudden. At the entrance of the lively gymnasium, Michimiya Yui, the captain of the female volleyball club, stuck her head out, as if waiting for them to finish their morning practice since a while ago.

“Sawamura, sorry, can I bother you for a while?”

Sawamura wiped off his sweat with his t-shirt and ran towards Michimiya waving towards him. He asked: “ What about?”

Azumane saw the two of them discussing by the corner of the gymnasium, thinking it must be related to the swearing-in ceremony. Speaking of which, what are we doing during the ceremony? And most importantly, when is it happening?

Azumane couldn't remember when the ceremony was going to take place.

“..... Everyone is working hard in different areas.”

Azumane sat on the floor, feeling as though every single bit of energy had been sucked away from his body. Just then, his head was hit with a massive impact.

“So painful, w-what is it.....?”

Azumane looked up and saw Shimizu looking down at him with cold eyes while carrying a card box. Shimizu coldly said: “You're blocking the way,” then walked away.

“To say such things to me.....”

Azumane grew teary-eyed, his hands touching the bruise on his head.

—

Clap, clap.

The morning sun spilled from the gap between the leaves into the dim shrine, a loud and crisp clapping sound could be heard. The next morning, Azumane had come to the shrine to offer his prayers while taking the short cut from the shrine once again.

“I hope I’ll become a wild and rough guy..... ah, but, hopefully I won’t be mistaken for a telephone conman.....”

Azumane’s prayers were more precise today. He took his wallet from his pocket, then threw in 5 yen into the offering box.

“Please, at the very least.....”

Azumane is a 185cm big guy with beard and long hair. Judging from his looks, no one would imagine him praying so earnestly. Just then, a shadow appeared in front of him.

“What have you been doing since just now?”

“Yah, yahh! Is it the deity?”

Azumane was caught in surprise, his waist suddenly lacking strength and nearly fell on the stairs. The person who quickly held on to him was of course not any deity, but coach Ukai. The coach asked in both shock and worry:

“Hey, are you okay? Don’t hurt yourself before the match.”

“S-Sorry. Uh, why are you here.....”

“I’m here for delivery.”

Coach Ukai pointed towards the white van under the shades at the front. The words on the car read “Sakanoshita”. The van was full of boxes of Japanese sake and beer.

“Are those offerings for the deities.....?”

Azumane looked at the van, half-dazed. Coach Ukai patted hard on his back and said:

“You..... seriously, you could just show your wild and manly side during the matches. There’s no point praying to the deities for such things!”

“Eh, ah..... c-coach, you heard what I said.....?”

Azumane staggered backwards, his ears red. “We’re in your car, main spiker,” said the coach. He then stepped onto the white pebbles and headed towards the van. Seeing the coach’s back, who was wearing his black plastic boots, Azumane finally squeezed out his words.

“Ah, yes.....”

—

Unknown whether due to embarrassment, shyness or shock, Azumane was all demoralised early in the morning, his footsteps slow as he descended the stairs towards the school. Once he was on the road, he met up with Sawamura and Sugawara coincidentally again.

The air in the early summer was very fresh, matching with Sugawara’s hearty smile.

“Morning, Asahi.”

“Don’t smile at me.....!” Seeing his smile, Azumane suddenly had the urge to kneel in front of Sugawara while telling him that. After greeting the two of them curtly, he asked:

“Let me ask you guys, am I really embarrassing.....”

“Hmm? Embarrassing? I think you should worry more about not looking like a high school student.”

Sawamura feigned ignorance and answered. Sugawara smiled and continued.

“When you stand beside Hinata, you guys looked just like father and son.”

“Everytime I thought ‘Eh? A graduated senpai came back?’, it turns out to be Asahi.”

“Eh! I’m not that old! Right!”

Seeing Azumane’s flustered face, Sawamura continued:

“..... I’ll let you in on a secret, coach Ukai looks younger than you sometimes.”

“Are you serious?”

Azumane grew pale as he stopped at his footsteps. Sugawara laughed at him.

“Alright, Daichi stop making fun of him, Asahi’s all depressed already.”

“I’m only 17.....”

“Like I said Daichi is just joking! Don’t take it as real! Alright, let’s go!”

Sugawara patted on Azumane’s shrunk back, and just then a female voice sounded from behind.

“Morning!”

It was captain Michimiya from the female volleyball club. The three of them turned around to greet her, each with a different expression, one smiling, one smiling bitterly, another a haggard face. Michimiya exclaimed “woah” in shock and then cooled down before looking towards Sawamura.

“Let me ask you, I heard that when the captain from the baseball team prepared a lot of interesting puns for his speech. What shall we do? Have you thought of anything?”

“Hmm, just the usual would do I guess. The volleyball club is the volleyball club, we’ll do the interesting stuff after we win.”

“That makes sense. I knew you would say that!”

Michimiya laughed heartily. Sawamura tilted his head while asking “really?”, slightly surprised. Sugawara nodded in agreement and said: “Daichi feels like a father sometimes.”

“F-Father.....”

Hearing Sugawara’s words, Sawamura was dealt with quite a blow. Azumane mumbled while looking at him:

“Daichi is our main pillar in the club, he just happens to look like a high school student.....”

Azumane lowered his head, then walked forward with staggered footsteps. Sugawara had wanted to say something, but he changed his mind, pursing his lips.

“What’s wrong, Sugawara?”

Michimiya asked, Sugawara smiled while answering.

“Ah, nothing much.”

“Really..... Guys look so happy all the time.”

“Because guys never grow up.”

Sugawara laughed bitterly, Michimiya laughed as well.

“I was holding back on saying this, but you said it yourself instead.”

Michimiya then looked at her watch.

“Ah, oh no, I’m running late! I’ll leave first!” Michimiya said and ran.

Watching her as she ran away in her sports attire, Sugawara mumbled to himself:

“look so happy all the time..... really?”

—

Azumane left his belongings in the clubroom and then like he usually does when walking through the curtain into the canteen, he greeted shortly with a “hi” and walked into the gymnasium. In the end, Nishinoya berated him early in the morning.

“Zero points! For the lack of vigor!”

“Ah, what?”

Nishinoya did not explain further to the shocked Azumane, his hands on his hips while commanding Hinata proudly.

“Shouyou, demonstrate!”

“Eh? Ah, yes!”

Hinata walked out of the gymnasium as commanded and stuck his head out, slightly shy. He then clenched his fists and shouted towards the gymnasium.

“GOOD MORNING EVERYONE!”

“Alright, pass!”

Nishinoya patted him on the back, Hinata exclaimed “I passed!” excitedly.

Tanaka came forward and patted him on his head to, praising him for his good job.

Azumane stood at the entrance of the gymnasium and stared at everyone at a loss for words. Nishinoya said:

“Alright, it’s now Asahi-san’s turn. Again!”

“W-Why.....”

Seeing Azumane stepping backwards, Nishinoya stared at him and shouted.

“Asahi-san! You think you can start playing with only a simple ‘hi’?”

“Uh.....I, um..... sorry.....”

Azumane’s shoulder felt narrower all of a sudden. Ignoring him, Nishinoya called upon Tanaka again.

“Ryuu is next!”

“Alright, my turn!”

Tanaka dashed out energetically. He shouted “GOOD MORNING EVERYBODY!” then ran into the gymnasium again.

“Perfect, 10 points!”

Hearing Nishinoya’s scoring, Hinata said enviously: “So good, 10 points.”

Just as they were taking turns to greet, Kageyama was standing alone at a corner practicing his tosses, while Tsukishima and Yamaguchi, standing further away from Kageyama, practiced against the wall.

“Ah, let me do it too!”

Sugawara, who found it interesting as he watched by the side, went forward. “Let’s do it together!” He dragged Ennoshita along, who was doing stretches quietly, and headed towards the entrance. But just then, Sawamura appeared from outside. Seeing his ghost-like expression, Sugawara’s expression stiffened.

“Ah, D-Daichi, morning.....”

“MORNING!”

Sawamura’s greet was as loud as thunder, vibrating across the gymnasium.

“Perfect! Daichi-san, 100 points!”

Nishinoya and Tanaka shouted their scores at the same time, but Sawamura was all unamused. He asked: “what are you guys doing?”

“We’re confirming everyone’s greeting!”

“Only with an energetic greeting can we begin the brand new day!”

After saying, Nishinoya, Tanaka and the first years dispersed quickly, preparing for the training.

Seeing everyone like this, Sawamura looked at Sugawara with a slight resentment.

“..... Surely you didn’t have to join in their mischiefs.”

“Sorry sorry, I was just thinking there’s nothing wrong with everyone being a little more energised.”

“Seriously.”

Sawamura sighed. Behind him stood Azumane, his presence diminishing as he mumbled to himself.

“Daichi got 100 points, huh.....”

Seeing Azumane’s depressed look, Sawamura exclaimed “woah” in shock. However, he regained his self quickly, then shouted at Azumane to “start with practice already!”. Azumane sank his shoulders as he walked into the court dejectedly.

“I, zero points.....”

—

In the classroom after school, Azumane placed his elbows on the table and sat on his seat. He should begin sweeping and cleaning the classroom already, and later he must rush over for club activities..... even though he thought so, he had maintained the same position for a few minutes already.

Just as his mind was wandering, he glanced outside the door and saw Sawamura and Sugawara passing by.

He laid his head on the table immediately, as if trying to hide himself. But he

had to reason to hide himself from the two.....

Azumane thought to himself while lying on the table.

The two of them belonged to the college preparatory class, yet they were still so serious with club activities, that's pretty impressive..... Ah, no matter during practice or in matches, I am very serious too. However, Nishinoya said I'm zero points huh. I'm already in my third year, should I continue studying or look for a job, no no no, I have no intention to continue studying. How should I put it, maybe I should make use of the way I look and make a name for myself in the world of telephone scams..... this is what people mean by "using the right people for the right job.....

"..... Hey hey, it's me..... no way, impossible, that way I won't be able to face my granny!"

Azumane held his face in his hands.

"Regarding the future....."

He suddenly could not take the weight of his future, his whole body leaning further against the table. Just then, his eyes noticed something small crawling on the floor.

"Uh..... that's....."

Blood drained from Azumane's face in that instant.

"It has appeared! A cockroach! A cockroach!"

Hearing Azumane's scream, although there were not many people left in the classroom after school, a few female classmates were still around. The classroom became chaotic all of a sudden.

"Yah, that's disgusting!"

"Why is there a cockroach here?"

"Hey, Azumane, pick it up quick!"

"Eh? Me? No way no way no way no way, I can't do it!"

Azumane stood up and shook his head vigorously. The guy sitting beside him called upon him nervously.

“..... Listen, Azumane.”

“AH, I BEG YOU! TAKE CARE OF IT! TAKE CARE OF IT!”

Seeing Azumane covering his face, his classmate sighed.

“That’s not a cockroach, it’s my eraser.....”

“Ah? Era.....ser?”

Although thinking it was impossible, Azumane took a peek at the floor nervously. True enough, a eraser was rolling on the floor.

“Eh?”

“Azumane, are you bullying me on purpose?”

“No no no no no no no no!”

Azumane shook his head once again. He then bowed to everyone in apology and said “sorry, causing panic like this.....”. He then left the classroom quietly.

“Even an eraser could scare me like this, looks like I can’t become a telephone scammer.....”

Having to even give up what felt like his bounden duty, Azumane walked towards the porch slightly dizzy, his footsteps staggering as he walked out. Under the gentle sun in the afternoon, Azumane looked at the grasses from the cracks on the road while walking towards the clubroom.

The other members were probably already in the gymnasium. He left his bag in the empty clubroom, then headed towards the gymnasium once he changed into his sports attire.

“Hi!”

Azumane was slightly nervous, purposefully raising his voice as he greeted. Kageyama then ran towards him, as if waiting for him for a long time. Kageyama bowed towards him.

“Can senpai please help me with practicing tosses!”

“Oh, okay. Wait a minute.”

Azumane then walked into the court. On the other side of the net, Sugawara

was just talking to Hinata.

“Hinata, let’s begin.”

“Okay!”

Hinata hugged the ball tightly as he answered energetically. Since the training camp during the golden week, Sugawara had been practicing quicks with Hinata. In the beginning, the two of them were not in sync, but recently it seemed that they’ve become more accustomed to each other. This was probably due to Hinata’s athleticism and courage, together with Sugawara’s great observation skill.

Azumane watched as Sugawara gave his suggestion while practicing with Hinata. Azumane suddenly felt that Sugawara “really knows how to teach well”. Just then, Kageyama hurried him to start.

“Azumane-san, please!”

“Ah, sorry sorry.”

When he turned around, Yamaguchi threw the ball, Kageyama arched his back backwards. Azumane ran up, stopped and jumped up high, his palm touching the centre of the ball.

At this moment, his brain was devoid of his future plans and memories of him scoring “zero points”. All there was was just volleyball.

“Asahi senpai! How was the toss?”

“Eh? Ah, hmm..... very good.”

Sugawara walked out of the court for a drink, noticing that Azumane was completely dominated by Kageyama’s aura, his whole body slightly trembling. Sugawara tilted his head while thinking. Hinata ran over, slightly worried:

“Sorry, did something happen?”

“Hmm? Ah, nothing, nothing at all.”

Sugawara smiled as he answered. Suddenly, he saw coach Ukai, who was behind Hinata, his face in deep thoughts, also, the coach should be looking at Azumane.

“Uh.....”

The perplexed coach met his eyes with Sugawara, the both of them turning around awkwardly.

—

The next day, Azumane walked past the shrine as usual, not forgetting to “greet” the deities while passing by. He then saw a familiar person. It was Sugawara, who was wearing his sports attire, his hands clasped peacefully.

“Suga.....?”

Azumane exclaimed, and Sugawara turned back. Azumane asked shyly: “Are you here to pray for good health and safety for your family.....?”, and Sugawara responded “yeah” before picking up his sling bag.

“What a normal wish.”

“Because we can’t possibly pray for stuff related to competitions, right.”

“That’s true.”

Then, the both of them were at a loss for words, the atmosphere unnatural.

He must have been waiting for me, how could he have come here to pray for health and safety? But, why would he come look for me..... did I do anything.....

Azumane wanted to hide his awkwardness, he then laughed dryly. Just then, Sugawara spoke:

“The preliminaries for Inter High, if we win the first round, the next opponent would be Date Tech High.”

“Eh?”

Hearing the unexpected, Azumane was slightly confused, then recalled what happened during their match with Date Tech High earlier in March. His suddenly felt a clench in his heart, as if he had been transported back to the day of that match. Azumane bit his lips.

“..... Yeah.”

That was three months ago. When they were up against Date Tech High, the nicknamed “Iron Wall” team focused their defense on Azumane, totally shutting

down his attacks. They were utterly defeated, and to Azumane it was a very painful match. Afterwards, Azumane, who felt that it was solely his responsibility, started avoiding club activities, and soon after Nishinoya was banned from club activities too. All of these were the result of his weakness and naivety. But.....

“..... Speaking of which, I really am embarrassing, is this really okay.....”

Seeing Azumane in a state of worry, Sugawara responded, his face serious.

“What are you talking about? I too, have a lot of flaws, also.....”

“But.....”

Azumane looked up, interrupting Sugawara. Then, he turned his head in embarrassment.

“You guys did what a ‘third year student’ should do.”

“Eh?”

Sugawara stared at Azumane, confused. Azumane stood up, then continued saying agitatedly:

“See, a person like me would never be able to present a speech during the swearing in ceremony! Daichi not only managed his own speech well, he even gave his suggestion to the female volleyball club! You too, you always observe the kouhais carefully and take good care of them, both of you have done the best possible as captain and vice captain of the club, while I get overwhelmed just thinking about my own issues! How should I put it, it feels as if I’m the only lousy one here! Isn’t this what you think too!”

Seeing Azumane inching closer to him, as if trying to grab onto a floating log in the ocean, Sugawara was both shocked and amused.

“Ah, so you’re only worried about yourself being lousy? I was still wondering if you’re stressed over having to meet with Date Tech High soon!”

Once he finished saying, Sugawara then realised that Azumane looked depressed. Sugawara apologised: “Sorry, I shouldn’t have denounced your worry as a small issue,” then stared at Azumane.

“However, Asahi.”

“Hmm?”

“Although you find Daichi to be very reliable, he’s actually lacking in confidence himself..... but precisely because of that, he tries to be more serious in what he does.”

“Eh?”

Azumane looked up. Sugawara tried his best to talk some sense into Azumane, as if trying to convince himself as well.

“That’s right, how can Daichi be stress-free? Yeah, impossible. The reason why he’s so strict with you is probably because he’s lost on how to lead his kouhais well.”

“Would a person like Daichi have worries?”

“No one is perfect, everyone has their problems.....how can anyone have none? As for you, hmm, to be frank, you’re too weak in mental strength..... However, we have been fighting alongside with each other since year one, I think, precisely because Daichi trusts you, that’s why he treats you with that kind of attitude.”

“Oh oh.”

However, Azumane suddenly thought of how Daichi looked when he scolded him “Shut up, you bearded good-for-nothing”. Sugawara added on, his confidence shaking.

“I think, that’s how it is.....”

“Great if it’s really like this.”

The two of them smiled at each other, Azumane’s expression loosened. He looked up at the sky and stretched his back while facing the morning blue sky.

“But speaking of which, Daichi is facing stress too?”

“Yeah, me too.....”

“Hmm?”

Azumane looked at Sugawara. His pained expression made him realise everything.

“We have to win the match against Date Tech High this time. Although scared, I still want to fight till the end..... even if I can’t stand on the court, I hope everyone would put in their best effort to fight.”

“Suga.....”

Indeed, I am not the only one who lost to Date Tech High—Sugawara and Sawamura, along with Tanaka and Nishinoya, everyone had put themselves to blame for the team’s defeat, carrying the weight on their shoulders. I am not the only one facing trouble and stress.

With Sawamura leading the team, Sugawara taking care of the members, what could I possibly do to contribute?

The volleyball matches are team battles, the ball that carries along with it the hopes of the other members will continue to get passed to me. Can I shoulder the hopes of my team members? Do I, the embarrassing one, have the qualifications to do so?

I am not alone, we are a team, that’s why we help each other, improving along with each other.

However, Azumane thought again.

Once you’re on the court, the person best suited to cheer on me is myself. He can’t depend on his team members all the time.

Azumane finally broke the silence.

“Let’s win the matches together.”

“..... Asahi.”

Azumane raised his head and said to Sugawara.

“I can’t let you guys steal the limelight..... I must contribute something.”

“Asahi, you’re not embarrassing at all.”

“I am after all the ace of Karasuno.”

Azumane flashed his smile, lacking in confidence, completely not in sync with what he just said.

“Say it with vigor. “After all” is redundant!”

Sugawara smiled while poking Azumane in the tummy. Then, he added on, his face serious again.

“Speaking of which, what we said just now..... don’t tell a thing to Daichi, I’m scared.”

The two of them smiled and left the shrine. Wearing their sports attire, the two of them rushed down the stairs. The trees above their heads swayed along with the wind.

When they reached the main road, they noticed Sawamura, who was alone.

“Oh! How rare to see the both of you together.”

Seeing Daichi greeting them as usual, the two of them couldn’t help but laugh.

“What’s there to laugh?”

Sawamura was surprised, while Sugawara answered while smiling:

“Nothing, let’s go!”

The three of them walked together, a few birds flew from behind the shrubs beside a building. Azumane looked up, staring absent-mindedly at the birds.

—

After school, halfway through the practice for the day.

“Azumane.”

Hearing coach Ukai’s voice, Azumane turned around, his forehead totally covered in sweat. What the coach said later was totally beyond his expectations.

“Can you do back-row attacks?”

“Eh?”

Azumane didn’t know how to answer. “Kageyama! Hinata!” The coach called them over too. Hearing the coach, the two first year members stopped at what they were doing and ran over.

“Yes!”

“Here!”

Having gathered the three of them, coach Ukai then explained what was

drawn on the small white board:

“We have a ‘decoy’ this year.”

Hinata’s body shivered while the coach smiled slyly.

“And it’s our ‘strongest decoy’. Listen, you freak duos will try to leave a impression with the opponents with your freak-quicks. Everything is the same so far.”

The two of them nodded silently. Azumane, as if influenced by Hinata’s nervousness, started to feel stuffiness in his chest. The coach continued:

“Then we decide on who should attack, as well as..... a back-row attack from our ace!”

Gulp, Azumane swallowed.

“.....Sounds cool!”

Hinata exclaimed. Kageyama, who was standing beside him, nodded in agreement. Kageyama must have been imagining how the attack would be already.

The coach looked up, then asked Azumane again.

“Can you do it?”

“Yes!”

Azumane’s shout vibrated across the second gymnasium. The sounds of balls bouncing against the surfaces stopped at once.

Nishinoya and Tanaka ran over and asked: “What happened? Asahi-san.”, while the worried Sawamura and Sugawara heaved a sigh of relief as they looked at each other.

Hearing the coach’s strategy, seeing the looks on Kageyama and Hinata’s face, although Azumane was still slightly unsure, he had already grasped the idea on how he should perform the attack.

“Back-row attack.....!”

Right now, he felt as though the tall and heavy iron wall that once stood in front of him is slowly opening.

-end-

See no evil

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This happened in an instant— On a day after school and before the Inter High preliminaries, the second gymnasium was, as usual, filled with the sound of volleyballs bouncing, the murmurs of the volleyball club members and the sound of rubber soles rubbing against the floor.

The second and third year members were practicing their serves while Hinata was picking up the balls around the court. Suddenly, he felt someone behind him. He turned around and saw the second year member Tanaka.

“Ah, Tanaka sen-”

“Shh.”

Tanaka asked him to keep quiet softly, then whispered into his ear.

“We’ll meet at sakanoshita after practice, don’t let the senpais know.”

“Eh?”

Hinata had wanted to ask further, but Tanaka had already ran to the other side of the court and resumed his serve practice, as if nothing had happened. Hinata looked at Tanaka, his mouth wide opened as he stood rooted to the ground.

“..... Eh? That’s weird?”

Unsure what had just happened, Hinata looked around, his eyes met with Kageyama, who was also picking up the balls. Kageyama asked:

“Did Tanaka senpai told you about the meeting too?”

“Eh? You too?”

Just then, a ball landed in between the two of them. The ball rolled back from its rebound off the wall.

“Hey, don’t slack off!”

Sawamura shouted. The two of them looked up with their foreheads drenched

in sweat and replied.

“Yes!”

“Osu!”

No matter what happens later, what is most important now is to focus on practice. Hinata ran over to pick up the balls, the rubber soles of his shoes rubbing against the floor.

—

“Alright, I suppose everyone knows why we’re all gathered here!”

He slapped on the table; the “do not be noisy” notice pasted on the tablecloth flapped. Seeing Tanaka looking full of vigor, Hinata took a sharp breath.

The first and second year members had all gathered at sakanoshita after practice. Seeing his senpais with a gloomy expression while sitting down on the chairs, Hinata was very worried if he was going to get a scolding from them, at the same time reflecting if there was anything he’d done wrong..... he glanced nervously at Kageyama, who was standing beside him, but Kageyama was just standing there quietly with a yogurt drink in his hands.

The engine of the freezer sounded throughout the quiet shop. That sound drowned away Tanaka’s passionate voice.

“At the pep rally the day after tomorrow, we first and second years will help in making the stage lively while Daichi-san makes his speech!”

Hinata heaved sigh of relief upon realising he was not getting scolded. He took a sip of the sports drink he’d been holding onto tightly. His throat had become dry from the nervousness since getting called out by the second year member and rejecting the captain’s treat before dashing out of the clubroom.

But hearing what Tanaka said, Hinata realised that he couldn’t be too relieved, either.

What the senpais meant was: at the pep rally happening on the day after tomorrow, they had planned to liven up the stage while the captain makes his speech. What’s more, it’s going to be a surprise! Tanaka senpai had requested the first year members to go look for the items needed around school.

Tanaka said:

“Hinata and Kageyama, you guys will go look for a portable CD player and a loudspeaker; Tsukishima and Yamaguchi will go look for pom-poms and a spotlight.”

The deadline would be tomorrow night, but since it was already late now, and not forgetting the usual practice after school tomorrow, the only time they had to find these items would be during their break time. Hinata swallowed.

The secret meeting ended and everyone left sakanoshita. The second year members have gathered in front of the vending machine in front of the shop, as if they had other things to discuss. Seeing their serious expression, Hinata’s mood heightened as well, and although it was already dark outside, his voice was still full of energy.

“This sounds like a command, how exciting! Let’s work hard together, everyone!”

Hinata patted Kageyama on his back enthusiastically; Kageyama glared at him, slightly unhappy. Tsukishima took a glance at the two of them and mumbled:

“We’re just troubling ourselves.”

“Exactly, we have so many other things to do, right, Tsukki!”

Tsukishima glanced at Yamaguchi, then said “ah, right” before deciding to get home as soon as possible. Just then, someone patted him on his shoulders—it was Ennoshita. Tsukishima turned around, slightly surprised.

“What is it?”

“You might find this ridiculous..... but consider yourselves lucky that you have these guys as your senpais.”

Ennoshita then ran towards Tanaka and the others. Seeing his slightly tired back view, Tsukishima maintained his silence.

—

During the lunch break on the next day, Hinata and Kageyama gathered at the corridor after finishing their lunch quickly. The two of them were always wearing their sports attire or t-shirts during practice, hence working together in their

uniforms was a rare sight.

The two of them walked on the noisy corridor during lunch break.

“Let’s go borrow the portable CD player then! Alright, we have to find it during our lunch break!”

“We’re only left with 30 minutes.”

“I think we should be able to find it at the broadcasting room!”

Hinata was very excited upon receiving the “secret mission”, but Kageyama was the total opposite—he looked even more unhappy than usual. But still, he did not push all the responsibility to Hinata, instead following him around.

The two of them walked to the broadcasting room opposite the staff room. Hinata opened the door, then pushed open the second soundproof door.

“Sorry, we’re from the male volleyball club.”

Hinata greeted loudly. A member of the broadcasting club, who was eating his bento, peeked his head out.

“Anything the matter?”

“Uh, we’d like to use a portable CD player for the pep rally tomorrow, can you lend it to us if you have it?”

Owing to his nervousness, Hinata’s voice sounded unnatural.

“Portable CD player?”

Hinata and Kageyama nodded hard.

“Hmm, it’s okay if you’re using it with a CD.....”

Then, the broadcasting club member walked into a room. Hinata peeked from the opening between the doors and saw many high-tech equipments in the room.

“Uwah..... feels like a TV studio!”

“You’ve been to one before?”

“Nah, but it’s the feel, the feel!”

“What does that mean?”

Just as the two were arguing, the broadcasting club member returned.

“We don’t have a portable one, just a fixed machine, how about it?”

Then, he pointed at the machine with many notches and meters. Although they couldn’t quite understand how the machine works, it should still be able to play a CD.

“Ah, if..... if it’s not portable then we can’t use it then! That, sorry, sorry for the trouble!”

The two of them left the broadcasting room immediately.

Alright, since there’s none in the broadcasting room, where else can we find a portable CD player? A place where music can be played..... Kageyama thought to himself, then remembered.

“Tsukishima listens to music all the time, right.”

“Yeah, I asked him yesterday, but he only has the mini speakers for playing music from his phone.”

“.....Ah, is that so.”

Kageyama responded irritably and turned his head away. Hinata noticed his attitude immediately.

“Hey, did you just answer without listening to what I said?”

“..... Shut up, let’s head to the next place already.”

Kageyama took a big step towards the front, slightly embarrassed. Hinata followed from behind.

“Where’s the next place?”

—

“I’m thinking, if we’re talking about music, we should look for the wind instrument club.”

Hearing Hinata’s suggestion, Kageyama responded with an “oh” and nodded in agreement.

“Let’s go take a look.”

The two of them looked at each other, then climbed up the stairs to the fourth floor, where the music room is. In the end, the two of them started competing against each other to see who could climb up the stairs faster, with each of them climbing up two steps at a time. When they reached the top, the two of them were out of breath.

“I won!”

“We’re not even competing!”

“Ah, what a loser!”

“Shut up!”

The two of them walked to the music room, and after adjusting their breaths, they placed their hands on the heavy door and pushed the door open with all their strength.

“Sorry, we’re from the male volleyball club.”

Peeking into the music room, a few girls who were sitting around a table eating their bentos or breads turned around to look at them. The tables in the music room were different from the tables used in a classroom—there were keyboards and music sheets drawn on them. Hinata asked nervously:

“Uh, sorry, is there anyone..... from the wind instrument club?”

A girl with braids stood up.

“Ah, yes, only me. The others are not..... is anything the matter?”

Under the stares of the girls, Hinata became even more nervous.

“Uh, it’s not anything important, but we’d like to use a portable CD player for the pep rally tomorrow, can I borrow it from you girls.....”

Hinata’s way of speaking made the girl slightly embarrassed. She bowed and said sorry.

“Uh, ah, it’s okay, no no no, don’t be like this.....”

The girl smiled while Hinata waved frantically.

“Owing to the teacher’s own interest, the wind instrument club had been using the gramophone to play music.”

“Gramophone? Is it those with the spinning vinyl CDs? Kageyama, have you seen them before?”

Kageyama shook his head. The girl smiled again at Kageyama’s reaction.

“Are there any vinyl CDs that wouldn’t spin? You guys from the volleyball club are such interesting people. Do you guys want to see it then?”

“Ah, okay!”

The two of them followed behind the girl, her braid swaying left and right, as they entered the storeroom. There was an unfamiliar smell of grease in the room.

In the small room, the percussion instruments, cellos and other bigger-sized instruments were placed near the wall, and on the stainless steel racks were boxes and containers arranged neatly, probably with smaller instruments inside.

“Woah.”

Hinata looked around the storeroom, and although the things placed in here were different, it felt a lot like the storeroom in the gymnasium. The members themselves took care of these instruments they would use often, carefully placing them in here.

“This is the gramophone.”

The gramophone the girl was pointing at was different from the one they saw earlier at the broadcasting room. It was a very big and heavy wooden box. On top of it were intricate carvings, which made it look like an antique. Opening the cover, there was indeed a vinyl CD inside.

“That’s the vacuum tube amplifier.”

Beside the gramophone was another wooden case, with a few small light bulbs on top of it. Hinata looked at the girl, feeling impressed.

“..... This is so cool! Uh..... does the wind instrument club have major competitions as well?”

“There’s the regional competition in summer for the wind instrument club.”

“Please do your best!”

“Thank you, good luck to the volleyball club too!”

The member of the wind instrument club clenches her fists in a victorious pose, then giggled embarrassingly. Hinata and Kageyama replied with a short “Yes!” before bowing and leaving the storeroom.

—

“I didn’t know it would be so difficult to find.”

Hinata then asked Kageyama while walking along the corridor: “Where shall we go next? I wonder if we can borrow it from the student council?” Hinata walked forward and then stopped in his tracks, as if he’d thought of something, blocking Kageyama in his path. Kageyama frowned.

“Hey, what’s wrong?”

But Hinata did not answer, instead asked Kageyama with a very serious expression.

“Did you hear that?”

“What?”

“Something.....weird.”

Hinata then looked around.

“huh?”

It seemed as though Hinata was the only one who heard it. The two of them stood on the noisy corridor, then listened carefully again before looking at each other.

“Is.....that the sound of wind? As if a spirit would appear.....”

“You said the same thing during the training camp, but it turned out to be Nishinoya senpai.”

Ignoring Kageyama’s indifference, Hinata’s facial muscles tensed up as he pointed to the front of the corridor.

“There!”

The light from the sun could not reach the end of the corridor, making that

area seem darker. Hinata ran into the crowd at the corridor while Kageyama followed behind.

“Hey, wait!”

Hinata stopped upon reaching the cooking room, then stared at the entrance. Then, he plastered his ear to the door.

“..... There’s indeed a sound!”

“What sound.....”

Kageyama plastered his ear to the door too, then looked at Hinata shockingly.

Indeed, an eerie sound, together with voices of other people came from within the classroom. “You open the door!” “Weren’t you the one who discovered it.” The two of them pushed the responsibility to each other for a while, before Hinata finally made up his mind to open the door himself.

“..... W-We are from the male volleyball club!”

He shouted and pushed open the door at the same time, then saw about four or five male students in the cooking room.

“Anything the volleyball club need from us?”

A bespectacled student asked curiously, and other than him, the others kept their heads low. Everyone was working on an old machine on the table, and when one of them pressed the button on the machine, the sound coming from it stopped after a while. Hinata heaved a sigh of relief upon realising that there were no spirits. He then looked at the machine.

“..... Ah, there we have it! A portable CD player!”

“I’ve been asking you guys since a while ago, what is it you need from us?”

Getting glared at by the older student, Hinata lowered his head in apology.

“Ah, s-sorry! W-we are from the male volleyball club.”

“You already said that just now.”

“Ah, is that so, uh, actually, we’re looking for a portable CD player that we can use for the pep rally tomorrow. But they don’t have it at both the broadcasting room and the wind instrument clubroom..... then we heard a sound coming

from here..... it sounded a lot like a spirit's howl.....”

The other students who were still busying themselves with the machine suddenly looked at each other and screamed.

“We succeeded!”

“Eh?”

Hinata opened his eyes wide while the bespectacled guy explained. It appeared that he was the leader of these guys.

“We’re from the drama club, and we were experimenting with the cassette to create the sound of spirits.”

“Indeed, we have to rewind it.”

“However, doesn’t it become not special anymore if one could tell it’s the sound of spirits immediately? All the experiments we did during lunch breaks would become meaningless.....”

The other students started discussing among themselves while crowding around the portable player. It seemed that they were going to discuss for a long time, and hence Hinata interrupted them.

“Uh! Sorry, but can you lend us the portable CD player?”

The bespectacled guy answered:

“This is indeed a portable player, but it can only play cassettes.”

“Cassettes?”

Hinata and Kageyama discussed for a while, “Hey, what to do?” “Since we can’t use it, there’s no point in borrowing it.” Just then, the bespectacled guy spoke to the others again:

“Hmm, as long as we connect the output terminal, the sound should come on. Hey, did anyone bring a CD player?”

“I think there’s one at the storeroom.”

“So we just need to connect that?”

The guys crowding around the portable player started talking about things the

two of them couldn't understand again. Although Hinata tried his best to make sense of what they were saying, his mind became even blanker.

"The output cable and the L cable are white, then the input.....?"

"Hey, what's an AUX?"

"How would I know?"

Hearing Hinata's voice, the bespectacled guys looked up.

"Hey hey hey, people from the volleyball club, keep quiet. I'll lend it to you guys after we've fixed it. You guys wait over there."

"..... Ah, yes! Thank you!"

Hinata and Kageyama bowed to the members of the drama club immediately.

—

Walking out of the cooking room, the two of them held onto the old portable player and CD player unnaturally. Hinata spoke with a serious expression:

"If this cable disconnects, I won't be able to do anything to save it, so please don't touch it."

"Who would touch it, stupid."

Everyone who passed by them looked at them like they were weird people. But the two of them didn't mind it at all, their minds only filled with Tanaka's command.

Hinata spoke with a runny nose caused by the dust from the portable player:

"All that's left is the loudspeaker..... where can we find a loudspeaker....."

"..... The ouendan*?"

Kageyama answered casually.

***Ouendan 応援団: literally means "cheering squad", similar to a cheer leading club, except it's made up mostly of guys, who use drums and blowing horns for performances instead of performing acrobatic moves.**

—

"What are they using the spotlight for?"

Also during the lunch break, Tsukishima, holding a packet of apple juice in his hands, responded with a slight irritation as they walked along the corridor on the first floor:

“The third years will definitely find out in the end when we finally found it, and then the plan will be terminated. Yamaguchi, you go look for it alone, I’m not going to.”

“But, the second year senpais looked so enthusiastic, if we can’t find it, who knows what they’ll say of us.....”

Yamaguchi shrugged and looked at Tsukishima before continuing:

“I think we should be able to borrow one from the drama club.”

“.....Why are you so obedient?”

“What?”

“It’s not as if we can win the matches just by livening up the stage during the pep rally. I really don’t want to get involved in such meaningless, passionate episode.”

Tsukishima stopped walking and leaned against the window by the corridor, his expression an obvious displeasure. Seeing him like this, Yamaguchi sank his shoulders in despair.

“I don’t think we’ll become strong just by doing this too..... but, I can understand where the senpais are coming from, therefore I’ll go look for it.”

Tsukishima looked down at Yamaguchi and sigh, as if giving up on retaliating. He continued walking.

“If we can’t find it, I’ll be made responsible too and get scolded by them. So let’s just find it as soon as possible.....”

“Tsukki!”

Yamaguchi ran to Tsukishima’s side, slightly relieved. He then asked:

“However, where does the drama club hold their club activities? We don’t have a drama clubroom in school..... who should we ask.....”

“I think the fastest way is to ask a teacher.”

Just then, they saw the club's adviser Takeda sensei walking past.

"Sensei!"

Yamaguchi ran towards Takeda.

"Um, does sensei know where the drama club members hold their practices?"

"En? The drama club..... um, I remember it being both the multimedia room and the cooking room....."

"Both at the same time?"

"They'll use the multimedia room before their stage performance; on usual days they would be at the cooking room."

"Is that so..... thank you sensei."

Yamaguchi and Tsukishima bowed to thank Takeda before returning to the corridor while discussing with each other. Takeda thought that they would probably head to either the multimedia room or the cooking room next while watching them leave. Just as he was about to move forward, he suddenly stopped in his tracks.

"A-are the two of them getting tired of the volleyball club....."

—

"Uh, that..... sorry, we're from the male volleyball club." Yamaguchi said as he opened the cooking room's door lightly.

"The volleyball club again?"

The guys who were still fixing the machine looked up. they had on their hands soldering irons, and at the tip of the soldering irons were visible white smokes. Yamaguchi was suspecting if these people were from the drama club at all, because right now, they looked more like members of the physics or engineering club. Although unsure, at the very least, the drama club shouldn't look like this..... Regardless, he started asking.

"Um, we're looking for a spotlight. If you guys happen to have it, can we borrow it from you guys for just a day..... um, this is the drama club, right?"

Hearing Yamaguchi's words, the president of the drama club answered him, his

hands still soldering.

“If there’s such a thing, we’d like it for ourselves, too.”

“T-that’s true, sorry!”

Yamaguchi bowed deeply. These guys are indeed from the drama club. He was relieved. The smell of melting metal filled the cooking room. Yamaguchi closed the door then looked at Tsukishima from beside him.

“Did you hear that? They don’t have it..... too bad, let’s go find the pom-poms first.”

“.....”

“I think the cheer leading team should have the pom-poms. Um..... will they put it in their clubroom? I don’t think anyone would be there until after school.”

“.....”

Tsukishima must have found it troublesome. He frowned and said nothing, instead looking at Yamaguchi quietly.

“Tsukki.....”

The two of them walked to the clubroom building behind the teaching block silently. Probably because the pep rally was coming soon, the girls from the cheer leading club had gathered together to practice despite now being lunch break. Yamaguchi had wanted to borrow the pom-poms from them, but they turned to look at each other, slightly troubled.

“We need to use them during the pep rally too.....”

“Ah, is that so..... sorry!”

Yamaguchi blushed while apologising, then left the clubroom in small steps. He had no idea what was going on with the other clubs, nor had he found any of the items the senpais needed, and besides, Tsukishima looked very unhappy. Yamaguchi felt very tired.

And just like this, they returned to the familiar second gymnasium, and Yamaguchi finally felt relieved. But even so, he had no idea how to find the items the senpais had asked for. Yamaguchi stood on the ground, his mind devoid of

any thoughts.

“Eh? Where’s Tsukki.....”

Yamaguchi turned around anxiously and saw Tsukishima walking behind leisurely. But even under the shade from the gymnasium, he could still tell that Tsukishima’s frown had deepened.

“Ooh.....”

Tsukishima walked towards the stunned Yamaguchi and said:

“You’re still going to look for them? We’ve already done all we could.”

“Ah, um..... that..... but.....”

Tsukishima inched closer towards Yamaguchi, his face fitting the description of a “sulky expression” to a tee. The looks of Tanaka and Nishinoya shouting in disbelief came to Yamaguchi’s mind. With Tsukishima and the second year members haunting him, Yamaguchi shouted in despair.

“L-Leave the rest to me! I have an idea!”

“What idea.....?”

—

With the portable CD player (?) in hand, all that was left was the loudspeaker. Hinata and Kageyama had gone to the ouendan, but to their surprise, the members told them “we don’t use loudspeakers, we use our own voice! Our own voice! Let your voice come from your diaphragm!” before chasing them out.

Then, although they knew it was quite impossible..... They went to the cheer leading clubroom. The members of the cheer leading club said, slightly surprised: “we don’t use loudspeakers. Speaking of which, some other people from the volleyball club came by too, what is it you guys are going to do?”

Kageyama stood in front of the vending machine and pressed onto the button for the yogurt drink. He mumbled to himself “loudspeaker, huh.....”. With a soft thunk, the drink was dispensed. He took the packet, then spoke to Hinata, who was behind him:

“I think instead of looking for it, making it might be easier. Didn’t Takeda sensei

have cardboards? Shall we go to the staff room?"

Kageyama turned and saw Hinata looking extremely happy. Seeing his ignorant face, Kageyama suddenly became furious. He finally let out the emotions he tried to hold back since just now.

"..... compared to the pep rally, I think you should focus more on practice! If you had the time to do all these, might as well go for a run, which would be more useful for a match!"

Hearing Kageyama's furious voice, Hinata responded with his eyes opened wide:

"Yeah yeah, right, perhaps so."

Then, he smiled.

"However, I've always been alone since junior high, and I had no opportunity to go for matches. So I really look forward to the pep rally! How should I put it, it's as if everyone is cheering on for you..... having that expectation in you as they send you to your matches. This feels so great! It's like telling them 'hey, I'm heading to the competition'!"

Hinata's face was all red from the excitement, as if the pep rally had already taken place.

Seeing his expression, Kageyama, who had wanted to say more, decided not to, as he pursed his lips and looked away. He thought to himself "so that's why", at the same time thinking that Tanaka senpai and Nishinoya probably felt the same way as Hinata.

Their dark and short shadows were cast on the concrete floor. The sun in the early summer shone above their head; the weather should be getting hotter and hotter. The preliminaries for the Inter High would take place soon, and once they win it'll be the official matches..... then the finals will take place in August, during midsummer.

"..... Let's go look for Takeda sensei."

After saying, Kageyama stuffed the straw into the packet and took a big step forward. Hinata followed behind him.

“Hey, don’t go running by yourself, wait for me!”

—

The same day after practice, Hinata, along with the other first year members, have once again gathered at sakanoshita. On the table were arrays of items whose uses were unspecified. People who didn’t know would probably suspect “what are they using these items for?”.

Tsukishima saw the flimsy hand-made loudspeakers placed in front of Hinata and Kageyama. He couldn’t help but laugh.

“Are those handicraft assignments for the summer break?”

“What, the same goes for the things you guys brought! Ah, but did Tsukishima make this slightly prettier one.....”

The pom-poms team TsukiYama brought were obviously hand-made. Ignoring Hinata, Tsukishima pointed towards the portable CD player.

“What’s that? Something from the Showa era?”

For an old portable player that could only be used to listen to the radio and play cassettes, calling it an item from the Showa era was already kind enough. To be frank, it felt like pieces of junk connected together.

“T-Then, what about the spotlight!”

Hearing Hinata’s retaliation, Yamaguchi shrunk his body while Tsukishima looked away.

“..... Did you guys not manage to find it?”

Just as Hinata was asking, the second year members have entered the shop as well.

“Uwah, awesome.”

Ennoshita was caught in surprise, while Tanaka and Nishinoya ran to the side of the table happily.

“Oh oh! These are hand-made huh, how passionate, good job!”

“Your efforts are deeply appreciated!”

Tanaka picked up the loudspeaker and pom-poms to take a closer look, then shouted “good job!” before patting the first year members on their heads to compliment them. Kinoshita and Narita went towards them too, picking up the portable CD player curiously.

“What is this?”

“I think my grandpa had something like this at home.”

Amidst the noisy atmosphere, Ennoshita stared at the items on the table before asking Tsukishima and Yamaguchi:

“Where’s the spotlight?”

Yamaguchi took a glance at the clock on the wall before answering coyly.

“Uh, probably..... soon.....”

Just then, the sound of a car parking sounded from outside the shop. Yamaguchi looked up immediately, and saw Takinoue senpai, an alumni of the volleyball club from Takinoue Electronics walk in. Takinoue raised his hand upon seeing Yamaguchi.

“Sorry sorry, you guys have waited for so long! Can I put this here?”

“Ah, yes.”

Unsure what was going on, Hinata and Kageyama went outside, shocked by the mini lorry parked in front of them.

“W-What is this?”

“So huge.....”

At the back of the lorry was a huge spotlight that an adult could only carry with both his arms. The spotlight shone under the light from the vending machine.

“I was still thinking who you’re going to look for, but isn’t this too formal.....”

Tsukishima, who had trailed behind them, was also caught in shock. Takinoue went up and patted the spotlight.

“If you spoil it, you will have to compensate me 150,000 yen.”

Hearing this, Hinata, who was still touching the spotlight, took a few steps

backwards. Seeing Hinata this surprised, Takinoue laughed.

“It’s a lie, it’s a lie. The residents’ centre had gotten a new spotlight, so I kept the old one. I’m lending it to you guys since it’s still usable.”

“Thank you senpai for coming here!”

Yamaguchi bowed deeply while Tsukishima asked curiously:

“How are you so close with the alumni?”

“Ah, we’re not really that close.....”

Yamaguchi found himself at a loss for words. Ennoshita looked at the spotlight, then tilted his head.

“But, where do we hide such a huge item? Just holding it attracts a lot of attention.....”

The members who were originally excited at seeing the spotlight became silent all of a sudden. Seeing such an awesome item, everyone didn’t want to replace it just because they couldn’t stash it away somewhere. However, if the captain found out, all of these would be for nothing. With such a huge equipment, not just the clubroom, perhaps even the storeroom in the gymnasium would have no space for them to keep it.

“Ah.”

Tsukishima raised his head and pointed towards the spotlight.

“Let’s just leave it in the hall. Just treat it as the property of the drama club, if we get Takinoue senpai to bring it in, even if the senpais found out, we could just say it belongs to the other clubs. Since we made use of the drama club’s name, we could let them use the spotlight too as a form of repayment.”

“Yeah, I can help. I’m with everyone.”

Hearing Takinoue’s response, the members were all excited.

“As expected of Tsukki!”

“Great idea!”

“You didn’t wear the glasses for nothing!”

Tsukishima turned his head away in embarrassment from hearing the members' compliments. Hinata, careful not to touch the equipment, took a glance at the spotlight.

"Eh, how long can this last?"

"Oh, do you want to try it? It'll be trouble if you guys don't know how to operate it on the actual day!"

Tanaka took out the coiled cable from behind the lorry.

"Nishinoya! Help me!"

"Alright!"

Nishinoya took over the cable and passed it to Hinata.

"Shouyou, here you go, is it long enough?"

Hinata took over the cable from Nishinoya and shouted into the shop.

"Sorry! Can we use the power point from your shop?"

Then, Hinata waved his hands towards Tanaka, who had his hands on his hips.

"Power source's okay!"

All members gathered in front of the mini lorry and looked up at Tanaka and the spotlight. Yamaguchi stood the furthest in front, his hands clasped together, as if praying. Tanaka placed his hand on the power button and shouted.

"Okay, here we go..... one, two, three!"

Zap!

The spotlight shone its powerful light across the slope, but went out soon after. At the same time, sakanoshita became all dark.

"W-What? What happened?"

"..... Must be a power trip."

"Oh no! The ice creams will melt!"

"S-Sorry!"

Faced with the sudden blackout, the first and second year members let out a

panicked voice. After a while, the lights in sakanoshita came back up again, as if nothing had happened. The members bowing in apology could be seen from the window.

Then, laughter sounded from within the shop.

It was unsure if it was because of Takinoue talking about his memories of the pep rally in his time, or because of Tanaka's plans for tomorrow.

Sakanoshita, which had witnessed the many generations of students at Karasuno for many years, was filled with laughter as usual.

The pep rally will take place tomorrow—

The time for the “surprise” had come.

-end-

Ending's perfect, everything's fine

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Apologies for taking this long! I became too lazy after Christmas (blame it on the festive season) and took longer than usual :x

Finally, here's the last chapter from me. Beginning January, I will be very busy with work and will have little to no time for Tumblr :(

I'm feeling really anxious/excited/scared/nervous for my job... I'm the kind who worry a lot about EVERYTHING and end up making myself feeling shitty from being so god damn anxious every time. Hopefully it'll not be as scary as I'd thought and that I will actually enjoy working!

Now click on to know about the wonderful happenings during the pep rally!

The bleary-eyed, chatty students have all gathered at the hall after the lunch break.

Under the warm sun, the hall was warm and comfy, and everyone was getting restless, especially with the lessons in the afternoon all canceled.

And most importantly, today was neither the opening ceremony nor the graduation ceremony—apart from the students who were wearing their school uniform, a smaller group of students were in their sports or club attire. Among them, someone ran in between the rows of students who were seated in their respective classes and went up the stage. This was slightly different from the usual assembly.

In the afternoon on May 17th, the pep rally had finally commenced.

—

Sawamura stood at the backstage to confirm his speech once again. These days, he had been carrying around with him his draft for the speech, the paper all crumpled and held up by tapes, and its contents re-written so many times only he himself could understand it.

After confirming the contents of his speech, the hall suddenly became lively.

Sawamura looked towards the stage. After a short opening speech from the principal on the podium, the members from the karate club, who were the first to go on stage, were just about to smash the tiles to pieces. Clad in their karate uniform, all members were full of energy as they shouted.

“Hah!”

The sound of smashing ensued and the broken tiles were all over the place.

“Woah.....”

Sawamura was dumbfounded. Just then, he noticed a hard object poking him from behind. When he turned around, he saw the members from the Wandervogel* club carrying a huge item as they walked past. Sawamura asked the president of the club.

***Wandervogel: A movement that promotes outdoor activities such as mountaineering , hiking and camping.**

“What are all these for?”

“Everyone in the club will be competing against each other in setting up a tent later on.

“By ‘everyone in the club’, you mean just the three of you.”

A member who appeared to be a kouhai laughed.

Some of the clubs came prepared with performances to impress the crowd, but to clubs with very few members, today was a great opportunity for them to leave a deep impression among the students.

To Sawamura, if the volleyball club had one more member, they would have been able to split themselves into two groups for practice matches.* Considering what may happen from next year onwards, he even hoped that there was another club manager. However, the popularity of the club is highly dependent on the club’s abilities.

***Note: I have no idea what he meant here, because even with 13 members they can’t split themselves up equally? But I guess he’s including the coach, which would make it possible for them to have a normal practice match**

against each other (7v7). If anyone can enlighten me that would be great LOL

Teams that are strong would attract a lot of members. In contrast, teams that are weak would not attract any members.

Sadly, the volleyball club right now, made up of 12 members and one club manager, were still seen as “the fallen champions” and “flightless crows”. Sawamura clenched his fist in frustration.

Standing beside him were the members of the baseball club, who were next to go on stage. Official members who were clad in their uniforms, along with the reserve members in their sports attire—about 20 of them stood in a straight row on stage, and after a short speech from the captain, the members started singing the cheering songs for each official member.

The students below the stage were all immersed in the songs, as if they were watching a match. They then shouted unanimously: “Hit a home-run—”

“We can’t lose.”

Unknowingly, Tanaka had already ran towards the side of the stage. He whispered into Sawamura’s ears.

“Don’t get it wrong, our opponents are not the other clubs.”

However, Sawamura’s words seemed to have fallen to deaf ears.

“Leave it to us, we’ll win against them completely!”

“What.....?”

Sawamura looked towards the dark and dusty backstage and saw the first and second year members of the men’s volleyball club all gathered together. He asked, slightly surprised:

“What are you guys doing?”

Tanaka and Nishinoya replied confidently.

“Although our presentation later on might be slightly over the top..... us first and second years have decided to cheer upon our senpai from below the stage!”

“Although this looked like an overestimation of our abilities, it was all done to showcase our fighting spirit!”

“Do you guys really know the meaning of ‘overestimation’? But, cheering you say..... sounds good.”

Initially thinking that a speech alone would be enough, Sawamura changed his mind after seeing the other clubs’ entertaining performances.

Tanaka exclaimed “yes!” and clenched his fists in excitement. He shouted towards the other members gathered at the side.

“Alright, here we go, one, two, three.....”

The other members started shouting under Tanaka’s command.

“Karasuno, fight!”

“Louder!”

“Fight!”

The members from other clubs had all turned their attention towards the members of the volleyball club, curiously asking “what’s going on?”. Sugawara stopped the members immediately.

“Hey, the people outside can hear you guys!”

“Sorry!”

Seeing Tanaka and Nishinoya bow in apology immediately, Sawamura smiled.

“Seriously..... however, you guys, try your best to liven up the atmosphere.”

“Of course!”

“Our kouhais are so dependable.”

Sawamura patted Tanaka on his shoulders. Seeing their interaction, Tsukishima mumbled to himself, his face amused.

“Dependable..... really.....”

Yamaguchi, who was standing beside him, kicked onto something accidentally.

“So painful.....”

The big paper bag toppled, its contents—the loudspeakers and pom-poms prepared by the first year members fell out from the bag.

“Hmm? What is this?”

Sawamura squatted and picked up a loudspeaker.

“AH— — —-!”

Hinata shouted frantically and took away the hand-made loudspeaker from Sawamura’s hands.

“Ah, uh, this is..... uh, the cheerleading club..... the members from the cheerleading club left them here! I’ll go give it to them!”

“Hey, I don’t think we should touch what doesn’t belong to us. Let’s just leave it here..... but what a surprise, to think they’d use an obviously hand-made item like this, is it because they’ve run out of club fund.....”

Sawamura didn’t probe further. His eyes returned to his notes.

Nishinoya looked at Yamaguchi, his expression threatening.

“S-Sorry.....”

Yamaguchi’s face turned pale. Hinata then reassured him: “it’s okay, it’s okay, nothing happened!”

Just then, the girls from the cheerleading club appeared at the backstage, each of them clad in eye-catching costumes. It was as if the spotlights were shining on them.

Sawamura then said to the captain of the cheerleading club:

“Ah, sorry. One of our first year members toppled your belongings over there just now. Although it’s been put back in place, do let me know if there’s any problem.”

“We didn’t place anything there.”

“Eh? Then these.....”

Sawamura was about to pick up the paper bag when Hinata, with an about-to-cry expression, stood in front of the paper bag to block it from view.

“S-Sorry! It’s not the cheerleading club. They don’t belong to the cheerleading club! Uh, ouendan! It should belong to the ouendan! I had thought they belonged to the cheerleading club, but speaking of which, those people who were here just now looked taller!”

“Eh? Ah, is that so.....? Ah, nothing, I’m not angry.....!”

Sawamura was slightly taken aback by Hinata’s agitated attitude and stopped saying more. The other members patted themselves on their chests and heaved a sigh of relief. The members of the cheerleading club were, however, looking at them with suspicious eyes.

This “surprise” was indeed a dangerous one. However, it was all for the betterment of the club, for the club’s victory, for Sawamura. At least, these were what the first and second year members firmly believed in.

—

“Then, I’m heading to the stage.....!”

Michimiya, the captain of the women’s volleyball club, said to Sawamura, her expression nervous, affecting the others with the same feeling. The members of the soccer club had all left the stage, and the volleyball club, which was fifth in line, was up next. The captain of the women’s volleyball club was up first. Sawamura said to her in a lowered voice:

“Good luck.”

Michimiya turned around and smiled lightly. She then went up the stage.

“I am the captain of the women’s volleyball club, Michimiya Yui!”

Michimiya’s face was flushed due to nervousness, and when she bowed towards the audience, she hit her head onto the microphone. Seeing her this way, the students below the stage snickered. Michimiya took a deep breath and returned to her senses, her back straightened as she started her speech while facing in front.

“We, the women’s volleyball club, is, to be very honest, not a strong team!”

Hearing her first sentence, the students laughed again. Michimiya took a glance at the student seated in rows in front of the stage and lowered her head in embarrassment. The other members of the women’s volleyball club, who were seated in their respective classes, shouted “Yui, good luck!” brightly. She smiled shyly towards the members and continued:

“However, everyone practiced really hard every day. Our hands were all

stiffened from the cold while hanging up the net in the gymnasium in winter, and we nearly fainted under the heat while doing our road runs in summer, but everyone persevered and pressed on. The members who were total rookies in their first years have now become the main attacking forces of the team. However, I think that everyone else from different schools are working hard as well.”

Michimiya recalled the faces of her members as well as the practices they had been through while delivering her speech.

She must’ve had more to say—memories that could not be put into words. Michimiya continued looking forward.

“Therefore! No matter who our opponents are—famous powerhouses or teams that are perceived to be weak like us, I think they’re all the same. The preliminaries will only happen once, and no matter which team, losing once..... would mean losing the competition.”

The assembly hall grew silent.

“Therefore! Therefore, we deeply appreciate every match we have..... with our best efforts, we chase and pass the ball to ensure that we can continue to stay on the court for the next match. We want to win very much! To win, we’ve been putting in our best efforts! Isn’t it right, everyone!”

Hearing her voice, the members who were dispersed around the hall all answered unanimously.

“Yes!”

The hall was filled with applause from the audience, surprising Michimiya, who lowered her head again. Then, she ran down the stage, as if trying to run away from the audience. She then saw Sawamura by the side of the stage.

“Sawamura!”

“Your speech is really great.”

Hearing his praise, Michimiya laughed dryly in embarrassment, making a victory sign with her hand.

“..... Alright, my turn.”

Sawamura patted on his uniform and walked up the stage. He looked slightly nervous from the back.

He walked up the podium. The hall was dimly lit, but because the side of the stage was darker, the hall felt glaring when viewed from the podium.

Sawamura looked at the first and second year members standing below the stage. Everyone was wearing their uniforms, and they looked nervous and uncertain. Seeing them like this, Sawamura felt all the more that he had to pick himself up. His nervousness from before disappeared into thin air.

Although Azumane once called him the “main pillar of the club”, Sawamura always thought that his kouhais have helped him a lot too.

Sawamura bowed towards the students and began his speech.

“We, the men’s volleyball club have ever been to the nationals, but in recent years, owing to our lack of capabilities, we were always eliminated during the preliminaries, unable to move towards the finals. However, this year we have a designated coach, and in our generation.....”

Sawamura continued with his serious speech. Suddenly, the sound of an electric guitar sounded.

He had thought that it was another club who had played the wrong music, and hence paused for awhile, waiting for the music to stop. The music, however, continued playing.

“..... What is going on?”

Seeing Sawamura looking around with a weird expression on his face, the students grew restless.

—

The people who played the music were, of course, the second years from the volleyball club.

Once Sawamura began his speech, the first and second year members, who had lined up below the stage, dispersed immediately according to what was rehearsed previously. Then, Tanaka and the other second years hid by the side of the stage and took out the portable CD player they had hidden at the backstage.

Tanaka looked at the faces of his teammates, who were all crowding around the portable CD player, his expression serious.

“Although I feel slightly sorry towards Daichi-san..... let’s perform according to plan.”

“Yeah yeah.”

The four other second years nodded nervously.

“If we don’t perform well, not taking the baseball club into account, we’ll lose even to the karate club..... speaking of which, Nishinoya, why are you crying?”

“Uuuuuuu..... Women’s volleyball..... our women’s volleyball team must win.....!”

Nishinoya was touched by Michimiya’s speech, wiping off his tears with his sleeves and sniffing sharply. Tanaka nodded vigorously.

“Look at Nishinoya! So touched, and even putting himself in their shoes! The anticipation and hopes from the students will turn into a massive supportive force. To attain this support, and for the sake of victory..... we must head towards the dark side today! That’s right, we’re heading towards a challenging path!”

“Osu!”

“Let’s go then, press the button!”

After Tanaka’s announcement, he pressed onto the play button on the CD player, but there was no sound.

“Hmm?”

“No no, that’s the recorder, press here to play the CD.”

Tanaka tilted his head in confusion while Ennoshita pointed towards the portable player. To prevent the connecting wire between the CD player and the portable player from loosening, they had used tapes to secure it, making the portable player look even more like a junk than it already was.

“Ah, right, so troublesome. Then..... let’s restart and press again..... Hey!”

Tanaka pressed onto the play button on the CD player. The CD started

spinning. The sound of a rock guitar, which Tanaka loved, played from the internal speakers of the portable player.

Tanaka carried the portable CD player on his shoulders and stood up amidst the darkness of the side of the stage. Seeing his back, Nishinoya exclaimed:

“Ryuu! You’re so cool!”

“Hey yo! Cool! Cool! Cool!”

—

Amidst the noisy music, Sawamura pulled himself together and decided to restart his speech. When he looked up, his eyes met with a glaring light. He squinted his eyes.

“W-What is happening?”

The light came from the spotlight borrowed from Takinoue Electronics. On the equipment were tapes pasted messily, with the words “Drama Club” written on it, but those were, of course, a smokescreen. After Tanaka told them about the situation and agreed to “lend the spotlight to them”, the people from the Drama club agreed to have their name used by Tanaka and the others.

Yamaguchi was controlling the spotlight from a corner in the assembly hall, but due to backlighting, Sawamura could not tell who it was.

Was it this bright when Michimiya made her speech? I don’t think so.....

Sawamura tilted his head in confusion over the series of events that had happened. Just then, Tanaka finally rushed up to the stage.

“Alright! Thank you for waiting?”

Tanaka carried the portable CD player on his shoulders, which was playing punk music. He walked to the front, and following him were Nishinoya, Ennoshita, Narita and Kinoshita, each with a loudspeaker hanging on their necks and pom-poms in their hands as they skipped to the stage. The loudspeakers and the pom-poms were the proud creations of the first year members.

Seeing the five of them looking this excited, the hall was suddenly filled with laughter.

“Yo! Volleyball club! We’ve been waiting!”

“Tanaka, nice job!”

Sawamura turned around hurriedly, clearly dumbfounded.

“You, you guys…… what are you guys doing?”

The second year members were dancing to the music from the portable CD player behind him. Unsure when they rehearsed, the five of them placed their arms on each others’ shoulders and started doing the can-can dance uniformly while shouting “Go, go, Daichi! Go, go, Daichi!” (I was very tempted to write “go go let’s go let’s go Daichi LOL). Nishinoya, on the other hand, performed the taxing Cossack folk dance while shouting “Yo! Ha!”.

And unsure why, they did not show a face of embarrassment or excitement from pulling off a prank—everyone was sweating on their foreheads while dancing to the best of their abilities.

The five of them had not done this to draw laughs from the crowd, instead just doing it for the sake of victory. However, no one could remember why they had to show their passion for winning by dancing.

Although they were very serious, to the others, it looked no more than an absurd and interesting performance…… what a pity.

“Volleyball club, good job! Perform more!”

“Tanaka, strip it off!”

The excited audiences started cheering for them, Tanaka finally let out a sly smile.

Although Sawamura was flustered, he didn’t miss Tanaka’s expression in that instant. He went up to Tanaka to stop him immediately.

“Wait…… don’t do it, Tanaka!”

However, Tanaka had already unbuttoned his uniform. He turned around to remove his shirt and threw it up against the ceiling while screaming.

“Everybody take a good look, at our passionate performance……”

Tanaka, Nishinoya…… all five of them threw their shirts up the ceiling. The students, as well as the members from the other clubs, all stared towards the

direction of the shirts.

The shirts then dropped onto the podium one by one. Standing at where the spotlight was shining, the second years struck a victorious, ranger-like pose.

“Oh oh.....!”

The assembly hall became even more restless.

Written on their t-shirts were the words “Karasu” “no” “Volley” “ball” and “club”(KARASU-NO-HAI-KYUU-SHA). These words— the passionate calligraphies by Tanaka, were screen-printed onto the t-shirts, and they had stayed up very late yesterday night to finish making them.

“Awesome!”

Hearing the cheers from the audience, Tanaka responded with the same level of enthusiasm.

“Here comes the climax!”

“There’s more.....”

Sawamura held onto his head, his feet rooted to the ground.

The five of them turned around to let the people see what was written on the back of their t-shirts. All students in the hall became silent while reading what was on their backs.

“What is written on their backs?”

“.....Huh?”

The words were—

“Inter” “High” “Cup” “Great” “Victory”.

“With this, we’ll achieve a landslide victory! Let’s go, Karasuno.....”

The second years followed Tanaka’s commands, everyone clenching their fists and shouted.

“Fight!”

The atmosphere in the hall was at its climax. Sawamura, who had regained to his senses, shouted immediately:

“Y-You guys, just what are you guys doing!”

But his voice was drowned away by the voices of the first year members, along with Sugawara and Azumane, who were shouting “Karasuno, fight!” “Fight!” “Fight!” from below the stage.

“These guys have worked hard!”

“What a mess!”

Azumane and Sugawara left their seats and rushed towards the stage. They laughed heartily while looking at each other. They had gathered the other first year members to cheer together.

Since a scolding from Sawamura later on was inevitable, the two third year members made the smart decision of livening up the atmosphere to its greatest and having as much fun as possible.

Hearing the cheers from the first year members, Tanaka and Nishinoya became even more pumped up. They raised their fists up high and cheered on the students.

“Everyone! Fight! Fight!”

“Let’s shout together!”

The people in the hall were all clapping shyly at first, but now they were all screaming and cheering with all their might.

“Fight!” “Fight!” “Fight!” “Fight!”

Standing with her classmates in her respective seat, the club manager Shimizu mumbled to herself while staring at the messy stage:

“Idiots.....”

At the same time, the club’s adviser Takeda sensei stood at the back of the hall, his eyes teary.

“Everyone’s cheering on us! We have to win!”

—

“I have to reprimand these guys afterwards.....!”

Sawamura left the stage, his face furious. Suddenly, someone patted him on

his shoulders. He frowned and shouted while turning around: “What?”

It was the dean.

“What kind of attitude was that?”

“Ah..... the dean..... sorry!”

Sawamura stuttered with his apology.

“What was with that insanity just now? As the captain, surely you should be able to lead your members well? How can you let them lose control like this? The volleyball club has always been this problematic, you guys should learn to behave more like high school students.....”

Sawamura clenched his fists while enduring the endless nagging from the dean. After a while, he spoke.

“..... It was all my idea. I was thinking of presenting a skit to make it more lively..... in the end, we probably went overboard with our performance, this is all due to my ill-conceived idea.....”

Sawamura stuttered.

“..... Ah, is that so? Then forget it.”

The dean still looked pretty upset as he returned to his seat. Sawamura stared at his back, his body shaking.

“Tanaka..... Nishionya..... even Ennoshita.....”

After confirming that the dean had left, Sawamura, who had been tolerating since just now, finally let out his anger.

“WHERE ARE THOSE GUYS!”

Sawamura shouted while looking for Tanaka and Nishinoya.

Seeing the way he looked, Michimiya, who had wanted to talk to him, shrugged and decided not to.

“..... But it was so interesting.”

—

“The performance was a success!”

“Just look at how uniform our performance was! Everyone in school will definitely pray for our victory!”

Walking out from the hall, the second years celebrated among themselves at the back of the school compound. Just then, Sawamura’s shout sounded into their ears.

“You guyssssssssssss!”

“Eh?”

The five of them turned around and saw Sawamura, whose face was like that of a demon’s. His head and shoulders looked as if they were giving out white smoke.

“Uh..... we just wanted to make Daichi-san happy.....!”

“We just wanted to have everyone support the volleyball club.....”

The second years, who had prepared so hard for days for this “surprise”, hung their head low at Sawamura’s scolding.

Sawamura glared at the five of them, who had lined up in a row. He finally spoke after a while.

“..... Do you guy know what you have done? To think you guys did all these in front of everyone.....”

The second years shrunk their necks, preparing themselves for the nasty scoldings from Sawamura. Surprisingly, Sawamura spoke in a serious tone:

“We can’t afford to lose, then!”

The second years looked up in shock and saw Sawamura snickering.

Tanaka and Nishinoya’s faces brightened up.

“..... Of course! We will definitely win! No matter Seijou, Date Tech High or Shiratorizawa, we will never lose!”

“Remember to liven up the atmosphere even more once we get to the nationals! Get it?”

“Yes!”

Ennoshita and the others answered uniformly.

Michimiya, who was hiding behind a tree while listening to their conversation, let out a sigh of relief and decided to head back to the hall. She had wanted to speak up for the second years should Sawamura reprimand them.

However, it didn't look like she needed to anymore.

"I have worried too much."

Michimiya's footsteps became lighter. Just then, the other volleyball club members ran past her.

"The senpais are so awesome!"

"..... How, how's the spotlight?"

Hinata looked at the second year members with his gleaming eyes in total admiration. Yamaguchi was pacing up and down nervously, while Kageyama and Tsukishima had followed them out of curiosity.

Sugawara and Azumane ran over too, poking Tanaka's bald head and Nishinoya's porcupine-like hair while smiling:

"You guys are really idiots!"

"Eh? When did you guys prepare all of this? I hadn't noticed at all."

Michimiya turned around slightly, took a glance at them and smiled.

"They are indeed happy all the time, how good!"

Michimiya's slightly curled short hair flew in the wind.

After the pep rally, the preliminaries for the Inter High competitions would soon begin.

To the third years, this would be their last, but to the first years, this is but their first. There must be a lot of unknown opponents waiting for them, and if they want to win in the preliminaries, they cannot afford to loosen up in any match.

Date Tech High and their "iron wall", along with Aoba Johsai High School led by Oikawa—the two avenging matches await them.

“Karasuno..... fight!”

“Osu!”

The wind in May carried along with it the cheers from the men’s volleyball club.

The fallen champions, the flightless crows—the crows who had been named so for a long time are now spreading their wings and soaring towards the upcoming matches.

-end-

[ENG] Haikyuu LN Vol 2



(So I tried my hand on translating the haikyuu light novel. this particular chapter tells about nekoma and their journey from tokyo to miyagi. please be aware that my translation isn't 100% accurate as i'm not really fluent in japanese. There's also T/N everywhere because some words are better left in Japanese, I think. Ugh.)

2nd of May, early morning. Tokyo station.

A group of people wearing red jerseys boarded the shinkansen heading to Tohoku. The stand out appearance attracted a lot of looks inside the car, but they paid no heed and instead looking for their seat number while walking. Yes, all of them were members of Nekoma Volleyball club who were heading to Karasuno.

"13C..... Here," The captain, Kuroo, and Kozume found their seats and sat and the shinkansen slowly started to move.

Holding the ticket in one hand, the third year Kai muttered, a bit disappointed, ".....14B, an aisle seat, huh?"

"Want to swap with me?" His year mate, Yaku, revealed his ticket which Kai accepted without any protest.

"My bad."

"It's nothing, I'm fine sitting anywhere. Ah, Yamamoto, is it fine to put my luggage there too?"

"Of course!"

When the second year Yamamoto easily answered while pushing his luggage into the rack, his wallet slipped out from his jersey's pocket, rolling over.

"Ah, damn."

Yamamoto's wallet fell beside the aisle and finally stopped in front of Kuroo and Kozume. Kozume whose seat by the window didn't realize it with his eyes stuck on the game screen. Kuroo who thought it was troublesome bent down, placing the wallet he picked up on Yamamoto's seat with a 'hey'. Then, with a serious face he warned.

"If you lose the ticket, you're going to pay with your own money."

“Ye.....Yes!”

At Kuroo’s words, the other club members looked at their wallets or their pockets, pulling out their bags on the rack, eagerly checking their tickets.

First year Inuoka said with a bright voice, “All right, there’s my ticket!”

“If it’s gone, despite going to Sendai you won’t be able to eat their beef tongue*!”

*Specialty of Sendai

“Hehe, wait for me, beef tongue. Because this me will eat it powerfully!”

Yamamoto was broadly grinning while laughing and behind him, Kai who sat beside Yaku asked.

“Is it only the beef tongue that’s popular? What about the other part beside the tongue?”

“Sorry, I don’t really know about that. I like fish more than beef after all.”

While looking at the club members who got excited over the beef tongue, Kuroo was thankful that today is consecutive holidays. In ordinary days, the shinkansen would definitely be filled with office workers. With them being noisy, the office workers would frown at them. Compared to them, since today was the start of the consecutive holidays, there were also the laughing sounds of the children from the other seats, further adding on the mood and the ease.

By the time the club members finished checking their tickets, the shinkansen was approaching Ueno station.

“Hehe.”

While checking the luggage again, first year Shibayama had taken out the ekiben* and was smiling in front of it. He didn’t eat the ekiben immediately because it seemed he was worried if he needed a permission from his seniors or not. Meanwhile, Yamamoto who sat behind him sniffed the smell and turned around.

*T/N: Box lunch bought at the station

“.....You, are those warm shumai?”

“Ah, yes! I have liked it since I was a kid, so before at the station...”

“It’s no good!”

“Eh, ah....., I’m sorry, Taketora-san!”

Shibayama shouted across the backrest, apologising in panic but Yamamoto’s energy was unstoppable.

“Ekiben is the thing that you should have bought here in the shinkansen! You have to eat it while enjoying the rural scenery!”

Yamamoto took out the train magazine from the seat pocket, flipping through the magazine while showing it.

“Here, they have plenty of ekiben columns for travelling, right? Look, this is [The Seafood and Red Salmon Roe Lunch Box]! This simple meal that makes you screams ‘Ride on!’ and this majestic shape! This presence!”

The two of them was arguing back and forth when Kuroo interrupted.

“Yamamoto, it seems today is the first time you rode a shinkansen?”

“Ah, no..... That’s true..... But! Isn’t this the reason why we have to do this in the ideal way with caution?!”

While holding the book, Yamamoto made an excuse while his face turned bright red but Kuroo said sternly.

“Shut up, don’t raise your voice.”

“So-Sorry.....”

“Well, I didn’t eat breakfast too so should I buy something? Shibayama too, eat your food.”

After smoothing over the situation, Kuroo took out a juice and took a sip. Kozume who sat next to him didn’t care about the situation that just happened and continued playing game.

—

A short time later, the food cart came by. The lunch boxes and snacks that piled up like a mountain served them like a stimulus, which naturally made them to be even more excited.

After calling for the staff that pushed the cart, Kuroo put on a fake smile.

“Excuse me, one ‘Abalone and Sea Urchin Meal’ please.”

The other club members had taken out their wallets too and sneaked a look at the cart. Kuroo who had gotten his lunch box asked Kozume who was still playing game.

“You’re not eating?”

“I ate apple at home so it’s fine.”

When Kozume answered while not lifting up his face from the screen, Yamamoto let out a sorrowful voice from the aisle.

“Eh! [The Seafood and Red Salmon Roe Lunch Box] is sold out!? Even though I’ve emptied my stomach to wait for this.....!!”

“Would you please wait for another time?” The uniform-cladded staff looked sorry.

“Uhh.....”

Looking at the troubled Yamamoto who was taking a lot of time, Inuoka cheerfully raised his hand.

“One sandwich please!”

Hearing the order, Yamamoto’s eyebrow rose in surprise.

“Sandwich..... Don’t you have any travelling mood? Are you showing off that riding a shinkansen and eating ekiben is not a rare occurrence? Hey.”

Yamamoto had crossed over the backrest and was getting closer to him and Inuoka denied in hurry.

“It isn’t like that! Because I want to eat the beef tongue in Sendai, so this is to make me feel hungry!”

“Beef tongue.....I see! My stomach has its limit too, after all..... For the sake of the beef tongue, I have to make my stomach in the best condition.....”

At that time, Fukunaga who sat beside Yamamoto chuckled.

“Ah, did you think about something interesting? Today you have you have to tell me about it.”

Yaku stood up and peered into Fukunaga's seat. When the second year Fukunaga thought about something, he had the habit of not saying anything but laughing in private. But there was no one who had heard of the contents until now. Even now, Fukunaga kept silent and didn't open his mouth anymore.

Beside Fukunaga who had gotten quiet, Yamamoto was still troubled.

"Ekiben, beef tongue, seafood, travelling, beef tongue....."

"Don't keep the other people waiting."

Kuroo had urged him to hurry up and Yamamoto finally accepted his fate.

"Fine, I'll have a sandwich too.....!!"

With an expression of determination, Yamamoto was taking out the 500yen coin, only to change his expression suddenly. He looked inside his wallet, cocking his head to the side in confusion repeatedly. He fished out receipts and the hospital's registration card and checked the inside to make sure, but he immediately raised his worn-out face and looked at his teammates.

"The ticket isn't here..... But I was sure I put in in my wallet.....!!"

At Yamamoto's words, the club members began to get noisy.

"Have you searched it thoroughly?"

"I feel sorry that you have to pay again with your own money."

"The price is more than 10,000yen....."

Kuroo reached out and patted Yamamoto's shoulder.

"That sucks."

The sandwich that seemed to pity him was handed over to the shocked Yamamoto and after saying 'thank you' the food cart left.

—

After passing through Oomiya for a while, the scenery immediately changed into a peaceful one. However, Yamamoto didn't talk about travelling anymore and instead was eating the sandwich messily with a lifeless face. Perhaps because it was sympathy or because they were in the middle of eating together, but the club members turned quiet.

When the vehicle had become quiet, there was suddenly a quiet impact. The northward train heading to Tokyo was passing by.

“It’s the E5 Series……!”

There was Kai’s voice; he was keeping a straight face but unable to contain his excitement. As if he was lured, Yaku who sat beside him looked out from the window.

“Eh? Do you mean the green shinkansen from before? But the thing is, if once in a while we’ve seen it, it makes me happy, but once we’ve ridden one we passed by a lot of them in the way. Rather than saying we’ve gotten used to it, it’s more like we get tired.”

After hearing Yaku’s words, for a moment Kai showed a hurt look. But it was soon replaced by his usual calm look and he quietly muttered with downcast eyes.

“Isn’t it nice that shinkansen gives a feeling of a once in a lifetime encounter?”

At the serious voice, Yaku earnestly said, “Kai’s words do have persuasive power, huh?”

The seat just behind Yaku was impressed by his words, but Yamamoto heard nothing. His head was full of the thoughts of the whereabouts of his ticket. Like in a small locked room, Yamamoto’s mind was rapidly being driven into a corner. It was an inevitable thought since the price exceeded 10,000yen……

Having finished with the sandwich, Yamamoto made up his mind and stood up.

“Kenma!”

Hearing his name being called, Kozume glanced at Yamamoto.

“I bet on your perceptive eye! I beg you, find my ticket!!”

“Eh?”

“Please, just like that!”

“Ye-yeah……”

As if he was pressured by the desperate request of the more than 10,000yen ticket, Kozume put his game in the sleep mode. Then he kept sitting and lapsed

into silence, looking at Yamamoto's surrounding and asked.

"If.....it's not on your wallet, how about inside your commuter pass case?"

"I've looked at it." Yamamoto replied immediately.

".....Your back pocket?"

"None."

"Jersey's pocket?"

"I've searched."

"Then....."

As the club members paid attention to their exchange, from behind them Yaku interrupted.

"Yamamoto, after passing the ticket gate you went to the toilet, aren't you? Maybe it fell there?"

"Eh!! If it fell at Tokyo station, then finding it would be impossible.....!!"

After Yaku pointed it out, Yamamoto held his head.

"So I've to pay it by myself..... Farewell, beef tongue....."

Instead of speaking to Yamamoto who was exaggerating his depressed mood, without changing his expression Kenma continued to stare around the vicinity. He looked unfocused, but he was remembering from the beginning when they passed through the ticket gate and onto the shinkansen until now.

"....."

Kozume who had kept quiet, opened his mouth with the same unchanged attitude.

".....Ah, here it is."

"Eh!?"

Yamamoto lifted his face while Kozume pointed his finger slowly.

"There, at the seat pocket's net..... That."

"AH!! THERE IT ISSSSSSSSSS!!!"

Yamamoto leaped on and grabbed the train magazine and there the ticket was, placed in the magazine like a bookmark.

“That’s right! A while ago, I wanted to check how much money I’ve brought so I looked into my wallet..... Then I wondered how much is [The Seafood and Red Salmon Roe Lunch Box] again and looked back into the page..... It had to be that timeeeeeeee!!”

After taking a glance at Yamamoto happily showing the magazine and the ticket, Kai calmly said.

“I know that feeling. [The Seafood and Red Salmon Roe Lunch Box] is the most historical ekiben at Sendai station. I heard it is a breath of life.”

“Kai’s words even make the ekiben’s persuasive power comes out.”

Yaku muttered while looking at Kai’s side profile while the said person was gazing out of the window. At the same time, there was another northward train passing by. Kai’s eyes glimmered.

“Oh, is it the E3 Series?”

—

After departing from Tokyo for approximately two hours, Nekoma High School Volleyball Club members alighted at Sendai station. Moreover, Kai was attracted at the shinkansen that had started moving toward north and took a picture with his phone. The other club members took out their phones as well. For the advisor Nekomata and coach Naoi who slept continuously along the journey, their back views were looking a bit mysterious.

“You guys, let’s go.”

Hearing Kuroo’s words, the club members answered in unison.

“Yeah!”

They lined up and going down the escalator, exiting the ticket gate. Gripping tightly his precious ticket, Yamamoto quietly passed the automatic ticket gate and finally after he was released from the anxiety he shouted.

“Arrived at Sendai! Beef Tongue’s turn! Travelling mood open!”

The other club members, while holding their big luggage, was looking around the station too and unanimously talking to each other about their impression on the station.

“Wow, there are many souvenir shops.”

“Compared to our station, this looks more like a city.....”

“Hm?”

Kuroo who noticed that Kozume who until a while ago was beside him was gone turned around in panic. Kozume was slightly behind; he was looking at his game screen while following them. Kuroo felt relieved but still reproached him.

“Don’t play while walking, you’ll get separated.”

“Yeah, I’ll stop after the save point.”

Behind Kuroo who was dumbfounded at Kozume who continued to play his game, there was Shibayama’s voice.

“Coach, who was the famous person from Sendai again?”

“That was ‘Date Masamune’, right. I think there’s a bronze statue here at the station..... Huh? None? Where is it?”

While Naoi was looking around the station, Shibayama was tilting his head slightly to the side.

“What did he do, again.....?”

The rest of the club members too, while knowing the name, but it seemed they didn’t know all the details.

“The one-eyed dragon*, right?”

*T/N: Date Masamune’s nickname

“He must be dandy*.”

*T/N: The kanji for dandy is 伊達者 while for Date Masamune is 伊達政宗. The first two kanjis are similar so to speak, it’s a pun on words.

“This kind of small episodes will come out from time to time..... Is there any pamphlet or something?”

As Yaku intended to search around the premise, Kozume who finally raised his

head from the screen spoke out timidly.

“He’s originally a feudal lord..... At a young age, he succeeded the family headship and expanded his territory in the Tohoku area, I think. The Sengoku period was young so unification of the whole country didn’t happen, but he was connected to the Tokugawa clan..... Something like that.....”

Hearing the explanation, the club members got excited.

“Senpai is so well-informed!”

“It’s unexpected.”

“You’re amazing, Kenma!”

“Eh, no, game.....”

Looking at Kozume who muttered uncomfortably, Kuroo let out a sarcastic laugh.

“What the heck, so it’s the knowledge from a Sengoku simulation, huh.”

Among the excited club members who were surrounding Kozume, for quite a while there was Inuoka who was searching for something and his eyes brightened.

“Ah, there it is!”

What Inuoka pointed was the sign where [Gyuutan-dori*] was written on it.

*T/N: Literally translated as [Beef Tongue Street]

“Ooh!”

The simple but powerful message made everyone to break into a run without thinking. Stretched after the sign, the road contained the specialty shops of the club members’ passionate love, the beef tongue.

“Gyuutan-dori is here! Exactly like a travelling!”

“Even from the inside of the station, I feel full!”

Not only Yamamoto and Inuoka, the other members got excited as well.

“I can tell the beef tongue is better than I had imagined.”

“Even at the souvenir shops, there were a lot of beef tongue products.”

“Looks good.....”

While they were getting excited, Naoi came down using the escalator and checked his watch.

“You guys, the bus is going to come soon.”

Inuoka and Yamamoto who was dancing with joy rushed over to Naoi who was confused and protesting vehemently.

“Coach! Beef tongue!”

“Let’s eat the beef tongue! Travelling will be better with eating the beef tongue rather than the sandwich!”

But Naoi shook his head.

“Sandwich?I’m not really sure about that, but at this hour there’s no open store, right?”

“Eh!?”

Yamamoto and Inuoka turned around from the Gyuutan-doori together. But as Naoi had said, from the rows of shops, it was still before the opening hours. Their shoulders dropped in front of the dark shop.

“Seriously.....”

“Noooo.”

Then, at that time, there was suddenly a light appeared at one of the stores. Inside the store, the worker appeared and turned in the sign.

“Ah, it’s open!!”

Yamamoto and Inuoka started running again.

“Just now, it’s open, right?! You’re going to do it, right!?”

“Yes, we are going to open at 8am, so could I have you wait for another five minutes?”

While being surprised by their sole vigour to jump happily, the worker answered. From when they arrived at the station, their earnest faces of yearning for the beef tongue, now they smiled and combined their voices.

“Yes, we will gladly wait!!”

But, at that time, Naoi’s ruthless voice was heard.

“Hey, the bus has come! Hurry up!”

Yamamoto and Inuoka turned around in panic.

“Coach! Another five minutes! Just five minutes!”

Looking at them who waved their hands while shouting, Naoi sighed.

“After that, there’s no eating time left, right..... Shibayama, go and bring them here.”

“Ah, ye-yes!”

Receiving Naoi’s order, Shibayama walked up to them while feeling apologetic. Then, with Inuoka who was taller by more than 20cm, he held on his both sides and dragged him away.

“M-my beef tongueeee.....!”

With his large hands, Inuoka clawed the yearning air of the beef tongue.

“Coach has activated his sturdiness, is our dream going to stop..... here.....”

Yamamoto was grumbling while he returned back and as if to console him, Yaku patted his shoulder.

“If we win, the coach might have given us a treat, right.”

“Ye-yeah..... This expedition.....I will attain complete victories..... In every station, I will eat them until I exhaust myselffffff!!”

The crying sound of Yamamoto reverberated through the station.

—



The club members rode the bus that had come. For the sake of the fateful rematch [Cat vs. Crow! The Battle of the Garbage Heap], they had come all the way to Oomiya. This was a match that they couldn’t lose.

Today they would fight against Tsukinokizawa High School, then tomorrow heading to Karasuno for a practice match and once again, their enthusiasm rose.

“Total victories!”

“Definitely beef tongue!”

End

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Hello Miyagi at “Seijou”

This is a chapter from the 2nd HQ Novel. It’s short, so I decided to get it done before working on a certain chapter from Vol 3 that is way longer. I’m not sure when I’ll get to that, but hopefully sooner rather than later. I actually wanted to do the Nekoma story at first since it was slightly more interesting but it’s been done [[LINK HERE](#)] so you get the Seijou story instead.

Note: This chapter is translated from the Chinese translation of the light novel, so the usual disclaimer on possible errors in translation compared to the original Japanese text apply. Apologies for any awkward phrases or weird expressions.

In the bustling clubroom, Kindaichi, a first year, opened his locker. He looked all around the room before glancing at the mirror behind the locker door. Just when he touched his hair, which looked like a scallion, their vice-captain, Iwaizumi, called out to him.

“Hey, Kindaichi.”

“Uh, yes!”

Kindaichi jerked and turned his head hurriedly.

Everybody in the Aoba Jousai Volleyball Club clubroom was excited, not just Kindaichi. If they weren’t looking at the mirror unnecessarily, they were texting with their friends or family. Nobody could calm down.

That was to be expected however, since a film crew from the popular local current affairs program, “Hello Miyagi” was coming for an interview. They were planning to interview Oikawa, the captain of the team and one of the prominent players in the upcoming Interhigh Qualifiers.

“You don’t need to be so nervous. They’re coming to interview Oikawa and won’t be filming any of you guys, so just behave as you normally do.”

These words from Iwaizumi were meant for the entire team, and not just Kindaichi. Ever since the interview had been confirmed, even Iwaizumi himself felt impatient and couldn’t calm down. However, what he felt was different from the other team members – it wasn’t the feeling of “I hope I might be on TV.”

Having known Oikawa since elementary school, once he knew they'd be getting up close and personal with him during the interview, he was worried that idiot would do or say something inappropriate.

If I don't keep a close eye on him...

Just when Iwaizumi was considering the matter with a frown, the door opened with a 'bam' and the person who entered was of course, the lead actor for the day, Oikawa.

"I'm really sorry that I always end up catching everyone's attention so quickly!"

That expression which would piss people off, and that pose he made when he was acting all cool.

This bastard doesn't understand the feelings of others at all...

"You're noisy!"

Without even thinking, Iwaizumi ended up head-butting Oikawa, who was smiling cheerfully.

"Iwa-chan, why did you suddenly do that..."

Oikawa staggered a few steps backwards, a trickle of blood coming out from his nose.

All the film crew in the gymnasium were shocked. When they had explained the filming process just now, Oikawa had been smiling cheerfully but after a trip back to the clubroom, there were tissues stuffed up his nose.

The bearded director asked, "...O-Oikawa-kun, why's your nose stuffed with tissues?"

"Oh, I just got a nose bleed. Please don't mind! It'll stop immediately!"

Oikawa replied, putting on a brilliant smile on purpose. The film crew gathered together, discussing the situation in hushed tones.

"So what do we do?"

"It looks... very natural, doesn't it? Isn't it okay?"

"Hm, it doesn't matter if it's in the shoot, but it'd be better if we shot it from

an angle where it's less visible..."

The coach's whistle rang throughout the gymnasium, breaking up the unnatural atmosphere. Everybody started to practice their serves and the film crew set up the camera carefully, so as not to disrupt the practice, on the right of Oikawa and began filming.

"Then we'll be counting on everybody."

Although the team members were conscious of the camera and nervous at the start of the filming, they returned to normal once practice began. Being one of the top four schools in volleyball in the prefecture, the Aoba Jousai Volleyball Team had many members, so a scene of them practicing looked rather impressive.

Looking at his team members, Iwaizumi nodded his head while looking satisfied and shouted, "I can't hear you!" Oikawa, standing next to him with his nose still stuffed with tissue, glanced at the film crew and began complaining.

"Tch! I look better from the left."

Unsatisfied, Oikawa stroked his left cheek, earning him a yell from Iwaizumi.

"Are you a female celebrity?!"

"But..."

"Then shall I make your right nostril bleed too?"

The camera recorded their conversation as well, but if the sound was erased, it probably looked like "the captain and vice-captain who were watching over practice seriously."

"Do you have some time to spare?"

Taking advantage of a gap in practice, the camera approached Oikawa who was resting. His nose bleed had stopped and once she confirmed the tissues were gone, the reporter placed the microphone in front of Oikawa.

"Is there anything special you enjoy about such large scale competitions?"

"There are many players who are really scared when they're up against us, and also players who are frustrated when they lose. It's really interesting!"

“...What?”

Caught off guard by a totally unexpected reply, the reporter didn't know how to continue. Iwaizumi, who was standing behind Oikawa and supervising the interview, made a cross sign with his hands and bowed to the film crew.

“Please cut whatever was filmed just now...”

Seeing Iwaizumi's serious expression, the reporter nodded and began interviewing Oikawa again.

“Can you tell us why you chose to come to Aoba Jousai High School?”

“Because the uniform here suited me the best.”

“Please cut that too...”

“Then, do you have a motto when you play volleyball?”

“If I play, I want to play until I destroy the opponent!”

“Cut it!”

“What are your thoughts on Vice-Captain Iwaizumi-kun who's played by your side for a long time?”

“He's here for the sake of making me look good.”

“Cut it!”

Although the director was clutching his head at the back, the reporter continued to ask questions without getting discouraged.

“So, then in these qualifiers, are there any players you view as enemies? I'd think Ushijima-kun from Shiratorizawa Academy should be at the top of your list.”

“Ushijima?”

The smile on Oikawa's face immediately vanished for a moment before reappearing as he answered.

“...Oh, yeah! He is the “Ultimate Grand King” (“Super High School Level Grand King”) after all. We definitely want to win against Shiratorizawa but I'm not really interested in him personally! [TL Note: This is probably a reference to

Danganronpa and the “Ultimate”/“Super High School Level” naming used in it.]

The reporter realized that Oikawa seemed to sound sarcastic and hurriedly flipped through her notebook for something to change the topic.

“Well... Oh, I did some reading previously and I heard that Kageyama from Karasuno was your underclassman in middle school. Since you’re both setters, what do you think of him?”

At hearing this, Oikawa raised an eyebrow.

“...Enemy? Is Tobio an enemy? Yeah, Tobio’s an enemy. That’s right, that Tobio is my enemy.”

“Sorry...”

Just when Iwaizumi was bowing and apologizing to the film crew, Oikawa looked straight at the camera.

“Tobio is not my enemy. He’s foie gras.”

“Huh?”

Once they heard this, it wasn’t just Iwaizumi but even all the television film crew who couldn’t help but wonder out loud at his unexpected statement. Looking at everybody’s shocked expression, Oikawa made the thumbs up gesture and smiled cheerfully.

“That’s because it tastes better the more the bird is nurtured.”

“...O-Oh, how poetic.”

“Foie gras is my favorite food after all.”

The gaze in Oikawa’s eyes when he replied was entirely serious.

“Thank you! We’ll keep in contact!”

After the practice, the film crew loaded their equipment onto a trolley and left the gymnasium.

Holding onto a ball with one hand and waving at the film crew with the other, Oikawa muttered, “That’s it? I’m sure an up close and personal interview could take an entire day.”

“I won’t be able to deal with that... The important thing is to win against Ushiwaka first. Look at this.”

Having said that, Iwaizumi tossed the latest issue of Monthly Volleyball to Oikawa.

In their special on “High School Players to Look Out for”, Shiratorizawa’s ace, Ushijima, whom the reporter had earlier mentioned, was chosen as a “Must Look Out for” player while Oikawa was not mentioned anywhere at all.

Iwaizumi had shown it to Oikawa deliberately and Oikawa’s face got all scrunched up.

“...Iwa-chan, I see you’re unfazed.”

“We’ve got a TV interview, so it doesn’t matter. Getting on TV is better than getting on a magazine.”

““Hello Miyagi” is a local program! Monthly Volleyball is distributed across the country!”

Oikawa started throwing a tantrum but that wasn’t anything new. They’d heard rumors of Ushijima since elementary school and were partners who had faced him together, lost, and then pulled themselves together to continue practicing. With such a “Grand King” in the same prefecture, something like that was unavoidable.

Back facing Oikawa, Iwaizumi only said this.

“...Since that’s the case, we must defeat Shiratorizawa this year and participate in the Inter High.”

When he heard this, Oikawa strengthened the grip on the ball he was holding. The slightly unhappy expression he had been wearing was now replaced by a courageous smile.

“Yeah, of course.”

The Determination of the “Iron Wall”

There’s no JUMP this week but here’s a special something I did with the time I had. I actually wanted to do a longer chapter and if possible, something related to Seijou but I’ve been really busy (there’s a ton of translations I need to do XD) and there’s nothing in Vol 3 about Seijou and the one in Vol 4 was longer and mainly about Datekyou too, so I decided to do this one first.

Note: This is a chapter from the 2nd HQ Novel. This chapter is translated from the Chinese translation of the light novel, so the usual disclaimer on possible errors in translation compared to the original japanese text apply. Apologies for any awkward phrases or weird expressions.

“Good morning.”

It is a certain auspicious day in May. The Date Tech High Volleyball Club members who are still wearing their school uniforms are arriving at their clubroom one after another after their classes have ended. The metal sheet that forms part of the roof rumbles as the clubroom door opens and closes.

“It’s really hot today.”

The club members kick aside various slippers and volleyball shoes, whose owners are unknown, that messily cover the tiled floor to make some space, and chat while they change into their jerseys.

Practice is about to begin.

Amongst them, there is a certain student who keeps walking in and out of the clubroom in a hurry. He doesn’t have a small built but when compared to the many tall players around him, he seems particularly short.

“Sheesh! I’m really super busy! Super busy! I’m so occupied with all these stuff, I’m so close to taking the last three letters from ‘occupied’ and just going to ‘die’. How fitting!” (TL Note: The last two lines are actually, “The people from long ago really knew how to create kanji. I’m so ‘busy’ it really does feel like my heart is going to die.” It’s an explanation based on kanji where “busy” is 忙しい which is made up of 𠂇 (りっしんべん) which is the radical for heart (心) and 亡

which means to die. I tried making more sense of it in English, but I still don't think it fits very well.)

The student who's speaking loudly to himself is Moniwa, a third year and the Captain. He walks around the clubroom in circles before leaving with a 'bang' and returning a few moments later, as if he was looking for something.

"I'm sure it should be in this box..."

On seeing Moniwa who's tilting his head in confusion while messing up the clubroom feverishly, Futakuchi, a second year who's changed into his jersey, says, "Moniwa-senpai, you keep saying you're so busy, you totally sound like one of those office workers who's been worked to death."

"...Shut up! I'm preparing for the Oath-Taking Rally, so stop making sarcastic comments and come help me! I'm sure the previous Captain's speech is somewhere around here... (TL Note: This is a rally held before the actual sports events to rally support, show motivation and promote the clubs.)

Moniwa sighs, digs around various boxes but only finds a spoilt knee protector, old cloths for wiping balls, a magazine from several years ago with the picture of an idol who's disappeared to god knows where, and a ton of dust that flies everywhere.

"Ahh, dammit!"

Seeing Moniwa tidy up the incinerable waste stacked on the floor, Futakuchi says impertinently, "Well, it's not like the Oath-Taking Rally's really lively, and our school doesn't have a cheerleading squad. Simply put, there are no girls in our school."

Moniwa, who is sneezing from all the dust that's flying around, replies as he hunts for some tissue. "That's not the problem! Don't you think you should treasure the Japanese spirit? If you overlook something small like this, it could cause a fracture and destroy the Iron Wall! ...Oh, pass me those tissues." (TL Note: The 'Japanese spirit' probably refers to "[Yamato-damashii](#)".)

"Moniwa-senpai... Those sort of examples that only old men would give, you shouldn't use them anymore."

Futakuchi throws him the box of tissues on the lockers and grabs Aone,

intending to head out of the room. Aone, who isn't done with changing, ends up leaving with Futakuchi, hands flailing with his T-shirt over his head.

The door slams close with a 'bang' and the metal sheet that forms part of the roof rumbles again.

"They're pretty strong but why must they be so arrogant..."

Moniwa's shoulders sink as he sees the door close. The other club members smile wryly and tell him to give up. Seeing Obara, another second year who is observing the situation timidly, Moniwa pleads with him sincerely, "You... Please don't end up like them, even if it's only you!"

"Ah, yes..."

Obara, who has his head shaved, replies, looking all pitiful.

"Quick, let's start now."

Futakuchi and Aone who reach the gymnasium first begin to practice passing. Although Aone is passing the ball surely and not saying anything, he looks at Futakuchi at the same time, as though he wants to say something.

"..."

"What?! If you wanna say something, then say it."

Futakuchi throws the ball at Aone, a little frustrated, but Aone remains silent, and just continues passing the ball normally.

"Say it."

"..."

"Are you unsatisfied with something?"

No matter how Futakuchi throws the ball at him, Aone returns the ball silently as usual, looking a little troubled but continuing to stare at Futakuchi.

After several rounds of this silent treatment, Futakuchi gives in.

"...Yeah, I know."

Futakuchi holds the ball in one hand, and looks up at Aone's face. Although Aone is tall and looks scary, causing people to avoid him, he is actually a gentle

boy at heart.

“We are part of the “Iron Wall” too.”

On hearing Futakuchi, Aone silently nods his head vigorously.

In order to apologize to Moniwa, Futakuchi reluctantly returns to the clubroom with Aone. When he opens the door, he immediately sees Kamasaki training his body – that’s his hobby.

“Oh, the troublesome brats are back.”

Kamasaki, who is rolling around on the floor with an ab roller, wears a wide grin. Futakuchi comments without thinking, “...Even if you do that continuously, your abs won’t divide endlessly, you know.”

“Huh?”

Kamasaki’s brows furrow and he stops in place. He doesn’t stand up, nor do his knees touch the ground. The fact that he can maintain such a position without moving at all just shows how much strength he possesses.

“It’s common knowledge. Isn’t a six-pack what it’s usually called?”

Futakuchi’s barbed comment makes Kamasaki rise to his feet. When Futakuchi and Kamasaki, both who are over 1.8 meters in height and Aone, who is over 1.9 meters, stand together, the clubroom seems even smaller than it is.

“What jabs? Huh? What? Some protein drink?”

“I’m not talking about jabs or protein. You know, abs...” (TL Note: The pun is playing on abs (fukkin in JP) against chicken (chikin in JP) and protein (purotein in JP). I used jabs instead of chicken since it fits better in English.)

Although Futakuchi wants to explain, he is interrupted by Moniwa who is tidying up the boxes.

“It’s no big deal. Just let Kamachi do whatever he wants.”

Futakuchi goes ‘Hmph’ but quietens down after one look at Moniwa.

“Hey, Futakuchi. Don’t stop halfway! What do you mean? They won’t split into more parts?”

Kamasaki anxiously lifts up his T-shirt to look at his defined six-pack, when Futakuchi decides to make another unnecessary comment.

“Kamasaki-senpai, don’t tell me your brain is entirely muscle too?”

“Huh?”

“Futakuchi! That’s enough!”

Aone lowers his head as his teammates start quarreling over yet another insignificant matter, looking very dejected.

Just then, he notices the banner on the clubroom wall. That was the banner made for the Oath-Taking Rally before the Interhigh preliminaries.

The sunlight streams through the curtains that were drawn while they were changing and reflects off the dust, making them glitter. Aone continues to look through the dust at the banner that’s hung proudly on the wall.

“The Iron Wall of Date”

Looking at the powerful words on the banner, Aone feels a jolt run through him, and as if affected by it, he grabs Moniwa and Futakuchi’s shoulders tightly.

“W-What are you doing?”

Aone ignores Futakuchi’s complaints and pushes them together.

He then points to the banner silently.

While being grabbed by Aone, the two of them raise their heads and look at the banner.

“...Iron Wall.”

“The Iron Wall...”

Aone nods his head silently.

“You’re right. We’re the Iron Wall!”

Kamasaki’s eyes sparkle, perhaps having already forgotten the matter about his abs, and puts his arm on Aone’s shoulder. Sasaya also goes, “Yeah, we’re the Iron Wall!” while Obara, who’s standing further away and observing the situation, and Sakunami, a first year, are both grabbed by Aone’s outstretched

hands.

Once they come to their senses, the Date Tech Volleyball Club members find themselves making a circle in the clubroom due to Aone.

“What are you doing?”

Futakuchi wants to escape but Aone grabs his arm firmly and with a ‘Hmph’, he finds himself dragged back into the circle.

He stops struggling and mutters to himself, “Ahh, sheesh...”

Futakuchi returns back to the circle and Aone nods his head happily, as he sees all his teammates with a sincere look on their faces and their arms on each other’s shoulders.

In the gentle sunlight of the afternoon, the wooden board with “Volleyball Club” written on it rocks lightly in the gentle breeze.

Captain Moniwa’s voice can be heard from the Date Tech Volleyball Club clubroom in the leisurely after-school atmosphere.

“We have to get to the Nationals this year for sure! Date Tech...”

“Fight on!”

The voices of the Date Tech Volleyball Club members resound in the clear afternoon sky.

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 1 [Pass It Here]

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 1 [Pass It Here]

I just bought the Chinese version of Haikyuu!! novel 2 and it came with 7 Final Haikyuu Quest chapters, which are 2 pages each, so I'm going to translate them. I'll also scan the illustrations soon too.

In case you don't know what FHQ is, it's the official RPG AU... and I can just say that it's incredibly ridiculous.

Warning for near character death in this chapter? Otherwise, do enjoy it!

Since the controlling grand king ruled this land, it has been a very long period of time. The people had fear in their hearts due to the rumours that the grand king had spread, twisting the meaning of what the others had said. Although they are still living, they had lost their hope and smiles.....

However, there was a youth who had stood up in this wilderness. He is a hero of around 15 years old, Hinata Shouyou.

[Going on an adventure after training and then defeating the great king; I'm looking forward to it!]

[You ran out to travel for a reason like this.....]

Hearing what the warrior had said, the archer, Kageyama Tobio was completely stunned.

Kageyama used to lead an army under the grand king, but he was dismissed because the soldiers rebelled. Besides that, there was the white mage Kenma, who wanted to rescue a friend who was a confidant of the grand king. The fighter, Aone who was full of mysteries and the grand king's arms for a long time, the warrior, Iwaizumi, who left because he felt that [this guy makes one furious]. The hero, Hinata travelled together with these people in the wilderness.

[Ah! It appeared! A monster!]

A small slime appeared in front of them. Even if it was a small prey like a

rabbit, lions would use all their strength to capture it. Therefore, the five of them prepared their sword, bow, staff and fists to surround the slime.

[Pass it here!]

Hinata shouted as he kicked and flew into the air. Kageyama's eyes flashed, immediately comprehending Hinata's speed and jump. He aimed at Hinata's raised hand and pulled his bow.

[...Hey, wait! You're targeting me? That's very dangerous!]

Hinata quickly landed and moved towards Kageyama to talk to him.

[It was you who wanted me to pass it to you!]

[That's because... we usually play volleyball!]

[Don't talk about it now!]

When Hinata was arguing with Kageyama, a monotone thud sounded near them.

[Ouch!]

The two of them turned around to see Iwaizumi injured by a slime attack... But the situation was not that simple. After Iwaizumi collapsed, he could not move. Kenma tapped Iwaizumi lightly.

[...Ah, he's nearly dead.]

[Huh? Really! People die in this story?]

[No matter what, he could be revived if brought to a church, so we'll bring him there and see...]

After speaking, Kenma raised his head to look at Aone. Aone nodded silently before holding Iwaizumi and his super heavy armour on his shoulder.

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 2 [Healer]

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 2 [Healer]

sorry for the lack of updates. too distracted by summer anime since this season is so good...

[Yeah, we beat it! This will be tonight's dinner!]

The hero, Hinata grabbed a furry monster with a huge smile on his face, which was full of injuries. As the fighter, Aone was carrying the warrior, Iwaizumi, he was unable to battle, putting Hinata in a difficult position.

[If a fighter is unable to deal damage, it would be rather troublesome.]

[When this kind of monster is so hard to fight, then how about the final battle with the Grand King... Maybe we should just leave the warrior, Iwaizumi here...]

As the white mage, Kenma, said this with a melancholic expression, Hinata moved in between him and the archer, Kageyama.

[You can't do this! We're comrades now!]

Also, Iwaizumi was with the grand king previously not long ago, so his knowledge of the castle made him an important comrade.

[.....]

Seeing the conversation of his comrades, Aone was frustrated and left the party. Carrying Iwaizumi, he walked into a field with human height tall grass.

[Hey, wait! Where are you going?]

Hinata quickly chased after him. But he lost sight of Aone in the tall grass soon.

After a while, Aone walked out of the field while carrying Iwaizumi.

He held a small wild flower in his hand. It was just an ordinary flower that did not look significant. He handed the flower to Hinata gently.

[Eh? This flower is for me?]

Kenma ignored the confused Hinata, and received this flower.

[This is a herb... it is a rare herb that can revive people.]

Hinata nodded in shock and looked at Aone.

[You... Your build is so large, yet you're of the healing class?]

Aone nodded his head shyly. Then, he took out the tools he held with him to brew the herbs by adding water and letting Iwaizumi consume it.

Then, Iwaizumi slowly opened his eyes. He moved his shoulders, making his armour clatter.

[Ah, I dreamt that I became flammable trash and then was thrown away...]

[He revived!]

[Uwah, what's with this, don't cry!]

Seeing Iwaizumi shout with much gusto, Aone nodded with satisfaction.

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 7 [Friend]

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 7 [Friend]

this just gets weirder every chapter l s2g

[Wahahahaha! We seem to have know each other too early, Kenma! We'll meet again!]

With the dancing sands, the red cloak of the grand king's confidant blew along with the wind.

The heroes were attacked by Kozume's friend, Kuroo and suffered from fatal injuries.

[Ouch... this hurts. That can't be...]

He dragged his pained body and crawled forward to take a small body. The label wrote [Wounds ★ Complete Healing]. Apparently, it was some kind of healing potion.

Is this a trap? Then, if this continued, he would not live anyway. Hinata licked the potion before it went into his throat and stomach. Immediately, his injuries gradually healed.

[That guy is so careless, leaving such a good thing lying around!]

Seeing his comrades drink the potion left over by the red cloaked guy and reviving, Hinata smiled. However, Kozume still looked melancholic.

[... He must have put it there on purpose.]

[Eh? Why? Isn't that guy a good person? Anyway, he didn't kill us, so maybe your friend wasn't brainwashed by the grand king yet!] said Hinata happily.

A frowning Iwaizumi disagreed. [It's completely the opposite.]

Hinata went [Eh?] as he turned his head in shock. Kageyama was sitting on the ground to maintain his spoilt bow, nodded in assent.

[That person would not allow him to anyhow defeat us.]

[That person is...?]

[The grand king, Oikawa Tooru.]

Kozume answered Hinata's question. His white cloak hid his expression. He continued: [The grand king seems to be the kind that loves the limelight...]

[Yeah, if anyone tried to take his limelight, he would definitely not cease complaining.]

Hearing what Iwaizumi said, Kageyama seemed to remember something that happened before. He furrowed his eyebrows while going [Mmm hmm].

[Indeed, the grand king is such a strange person.]

Just then, in a cast far away from the heroes, the grand king sitting on his throne sneezed loudly.

[ACHOO!]

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 15 [Punishment]

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 15 [Punishment]

...I got a new job which pays more but has more workload, so expect slower translations orz. There's another 2 parts after this which I hope to finish by November?

[I'm so hungry...]

The hero, Hinata lay on the ground listlessly. [Hey, stand up.] The archer, Kageyama kicked him unsympathetically. Mumbling, Hinata stood up and saw the small crow which was resting on the white mage, Kenma's staff.

[Chicken skewer?]

[W-wait, you can't do that... I rescued him when he was close to death...]

[Ah! Found a lizard!]

Having found prey, Hinata moved forward. Suddenly, a man blocked him.

[Whoa! Although nobody called us, but we still came!]

The ones who made the weird voices were two small demons wearing black bodysuits.

[That lizard, we'll be taking it!]

[Protein! Collagen! Blood! All these are for Lady Kiyoko! Let's go, Nishinoya!]

[W-wait! Wait... I also want to eat it!]

Seeing Hinata fight with that pair, the fighter, Iwaizumi mumbled in surprised: [That shorty is sure lively.]

[That's the idiot's only good point.]

Kageyama answered nonchalantly. Hinata held a lizard with one hand and stood up.

[Yay! I won!]

The pair of small demons clutched their heads full of bumps and shouted.

[Damn it... If we don't bring food back, we'll definitely be scolded by Lady Kiyoko!]

[If we come back empty-handed, we'll be punished for sure!]

Despite their words, the two of them had sparkles of anticipation in their eyes.

[Even if it's a fierce punishment... we'll bear it! Let's go, Ryuu-chan!]

Then, the two of them left happily quickly.

Hinata held the lizard as he looked at the backs of the pair. He asked Kenma in concern: [Would it be better if I let them have the pretty?]

[...No, I think you don't need to give it to them.]

[Translation] HAIKYUU!! NOVEL VOL. 2 /

FINAL HAIKYUU QUEST (5)

I'm taking over the translation from [silveryogi](#) for the two remaining chapters of the Final Haikyuu Quest mini-novel thing that is included in the 2nd Haikyuu!! novel. I'm using the the raw/Japanese version that's been typed out by [fedoraowl](#) (thank you!).

Without further ado, here it is!

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 22 「Who is the Spy」

"Fuhahahaha! It doesn't seem to be the time to fight yet, let's meet again sometime!" Amid the fluttering yellow dust, the Grand King's entourage, Kuroo Tetsurou, flipped his maroon cloak and disappeared.

As he tended to the wounds using the healing potion that indeed was dropped by Kuroo, Hinata the Hero said, "Say, I wonder how does the Grand King's subordinate know our whereabouts?"

Undoubtedly, the surrounding was a completely trackless wilderness. They also did not reveal their identities at the town that they had dropped by earlier. How, indeed, did they discover Hinata and friends' whereabouts? The whole party was puzzled.

"Could there be a spy among us here?"

Kozume the White Mage hid his face into his cloak at those blunt words that Kageyama the Archer just uttered. He whispered, "..... It's not me."

"No, it doesn't mean we're suspecting you, Kenma....! Oi, Kageyama! Don't say such a thing! We're comrades! You said that, but you used to be the Grand King's underling, too, didn't you!"

At Hinata's hasty retort, Kageyama answered indignantly. "I'm different. I, rather, I want to... I want to defeat that person, Oikawa-san, with these hands."

"Me too. I'll defeat him," Iwaizumi the Warrior agreed to Kageyama's words.

Hinata looked up to their last comrade, Aone the Fighter. Hinata had not yet asked him why he joined this party. "And what about No-Eyebrow.....?"

Aone shook his head anxiously. It seemed that there might be a reason that he could not say to other people.

Iwaizumi lent a helping hand, saying, "He's a lifesaver, don't doubt him."

The search for the spy was back to square one.

"Then the remaining one... is only this guy." Hinata laughed a little, and poked at the crow chick that had been perching on Kozume's staff. The tense atmosphere among the 5 people loosened up.

But suddenly, the crow chick opened up its small beak. *"I have no choice now that it's found out."*

"Eeeeh!?"

Ignoring the shocked party, the crow chick flapped its wings and flew up into the sky.

Looking up at its shadow, Hinata yelled out disgruntledly, "Why, you! The next time we meet I'll be sure to turn you into chicken skewers!"

—

[Next chapter](#)

[Translation] HAIKYUU!! NOVEL VOL. 2 /

FINAL HAIKYUU QUEST (6)

Final Haikyuu Quest: Level 31 「Half of the World」

Here was Grand King Oikawa's castle. In the room with provided with every luxury imaginable, on the extravagant throne, the Grand King was sulking.

"Why in the world aren't they making their way here immediately? I feel like crushing them already," he grumbled as he picked up his favourite [milk bread](#) from the pile of it served on a golden plate.

The beautiful princess Michimiya, who was confined within a crystal ball, also pouted together with him.

Seeing those two, Shimizu the Succubus* who was clad in tight-fitting bondage fashion, spoke up coldly while stroking the head of the crow chick that had escaped, "Iwaizumi the Warrior and Kageyama the Archer seem to be avoiding a confrontation with the Grand King."

"Eh? Why? Don't Iwa-chan and Tobio want to defeat me? Are they getting the cold feet now?"

As the Grand King leaned forward to ask that, the close advisor Kuroo gazed into the crystal ball in his hands. Within it, the figures of the Hero and others came into focus.

--

As the road forked, Hinata the Hero inquired. "Which road do you think will lead to the Grand King's castle?"

Both roads looked desolate, and there did not seem to be any human presence at all.

"Isn't it the right one?"

As Kozume the White Mage pointed at the road on the right with his staff, Iwaizumi objected strongly, "Aah, that definitely isn't it, it must be the left one,

left! You've gotta believe the words of this ex-subordinate."

"The right one... I feel something unpleasant about it."

Upon hearing Kageyama's similar words, Kozume did not argue any further.

Hinata stepped forward cheerily, "Then, let's go to the left!"

--

"What was that, it's supposed to be the right one! What are they doing!"

The Grand King furled his half-eaten bread, and Kuroo's crystal ball returned to a normal transparent ball.

Shimizu returned the crow chick into its cage, and spoke up. Her tone was indeed cold. "It seems like those two hate you too much, and unconsciously avoid the castle, doesn't it."

"Aah, that's enough!"

The Grand King dismissed Shimizu and Kuroo from the room, and on his throne, he put his arms around his knees. "I've even prepared half of the world and been waiting! ... Iwa-chan hurry up and come here!!"

<To be continued?>

*The kanji in the Japanese version says "Shimizu the Witch" but the furigana says "Succubus".

(DO YOU SEE THAT IWAOI/OIIWA I SWEAR TO GOD OIKAWA TOORU <3)

And there's that! The final two translations of Final Haikyuu Quest short(?) chapters that came with Haikyuu!! 2nd novel. Hope you guys enjoyed it~

[Translation of part 5 by me](#)

Translation of parts 1-4 can be found on [silveryogi's](#) page

Original Japanese raws can be found on [fedoraowl's](#) page

[Translation of Haikyu Fighter/novel 3 chapters by me](#)